

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE
DOCUMENTING CHANGE

PROJECT REPORT

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Minnesota State Historical Records Advisory Board
North Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board

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AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE: DOCUMENTING CHANGE

As Jerry Newborg notes in the following comment, the project that became *Agriculture and Rural Life: Documenting Change* has a lengthy history. The need to ensure adequate documentation of these areas is one that has appeared for years as a priority for both the Minnesota and North Dakota state historical records advisory boards.

In Minnesota the interest has generated a number of meetings, small projects, and conferences over the last ten years. The Minnesota Board has organized meetings with private social service providers, migrant labor representatives, farmers, and advocates of rural economic development. It commissioned surveys of nonpublic organizations that provide service to residents of small towns and farms in northwestern part of the state, and of organizations providing services to the migrant laborers and Hispanic communities in that same region. The Board also commissioned a small oral history project in southwestern Minnesota, organized to document the economic and social forces that led to the closing of a rural church.

Each of these projects provided the Board with more information and a greater sense of the need to understand the challenges involved in documentation. The subjects – agriculture and rural life – are immense, however, and in both states the very scope of the issues involved served as a recurrent check on enthusiasm. Finally, with urging from our late colleague Lila J. Goff, the Minnesota Historical Society's Assistant Director for Library and Archives and Deputy Coordinator of the Board, a project was defined.

The decision to use the Red River Valley of the North as a focus for the project was made easy by the similar interests of the North Dakota and Minnesota boards. Additional cooperation was generously given by staff at the archives of the University of Manitoba, recognizing both the importance of their work in this region, and the geographical fact of the Red River as an international waterway.

The project provided remarkable opportunities for communication with residents of farms and small towns, allowing us to learn directly from them about the forces they see shaping their environment, and gaining their advice on avenues for accurate documentation of those realities. The project has brought valuable information to light and stands as a fine example of cooperation between two state boards united on a single mission. As the Minnesota Board moves into an extensive process of review and planning, the information gained from this project will certainly affect consideration of the priorities that will shape its work in the coming years.

The opportunity to pursue this important agenda with our colleagues in North Dakota has been most rewarding. We remain especially grateful for the inspired work of Lila Goff, whose vision and determination made this project possible.

Nina Archabal

PROJECT REVIEW

The genesis of this project goes back nearly twenty years. In 1981, facing the threatened elimination of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grants program, the NHPRC funded 27 state assessment projects in what turned out to be a first round of assessment and, later, planning projects for state historical records advisory boards. Minnesota and North Dakota were both in this first round of assessment and planning, each producing its published report in 1983.¹ Representatives of those 27 states came together in Atlanta in June of that same year for an evaluation of what had been done. Interesting to me, only two things stuck in my memory from that meeting: (1), the overly gloomy assessment of American archives as immortalized in the conference report, *Documenting America*², and (2), a criticism by reviewer Margaret Child that all the projects had been myopic, failing to look beyond state borders in any of a host of areas, "...bound and determined not only to go it alone but to reinvent the wheel wherever and whenever possible."³ The criticism stuck with me because it ignored the many informal communications between colleagues, the amount of borrowing of ideas and processes, and the willingness to share that has characterized the archives field. The criticism seemed fundamentally unfair for many reasons, not the least of which was the direction given at the outset to examine "statewide functions and services." Perhaps most of all, the criticism stuck with me because I recognized a large grain of truth and I hadn't thought of it first.

While the idea of working with our neighboring states was intriguing, North Dakota's assessment report contained 57 recommendations for actions, none of which directly involved neighboring states. But as the 1980s closed and the North Dakota SHRAB contemplated its second board support grant proposal to NHPRC, it seemed like an opportune time to approach the subject again with colleagues in Minnesota and South Dakota. Discussions with James Fogerty and Lila Goff of the Minnesota Historical Society led to a joint meeting of the two State Historical Records Advisory Boards on June 19, 1992. The agenda laid out the two states' objectives. Minnesota objectives were stated to be "documenting agriculture and rural life and the changing face of rural Minnesota." North Dakota objectives were given as examining the "Red River Valley as a region transcending state and national boundaries." The meeting had good representation and participation from both state boards, representation from the

¹*North Dakota's Forgotten Heritage: Public and Private Records as Historical Documents*, North Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board, Bismarck, North Dakota, June 1983; *Historical Records in Minnesota: Final Report of the Records Assessment and Reporting Project of the Minnesota State Historical Records Advisory Board*, St. Paul, March, 1983.

²Lisa B. Weber, ed., *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States*, National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, Albany, NY, 1983.

³*Ibid*, 53.

University of Manitoba added an international element, and our convergent interests were evident and well expressed. This was, all agreed, just the beginning.

In fact, it was the beginning of more meetings with significantly prolonged intervening times of casual communication about how “we really need to move forward on this project.” A turning point came at a joint meeting in August 1997. Prodded by a couple of board members who believed we had enjoyed the problem long enough, participants reached a general consensus on a smaller, more focused project. A subsequent meeting in June 1998 of the Minnesota Historical Records Advisory Board in Saint Paul, which I attended, further endorsed the project. A meeting of the project committee produced a draft proposal which ultimately produced the current project. The proposal was submitted to NHPRC in May 1999, the project began in January 2000, and will end December 2001.

Even if the 1983 seed-planting is dismissed, this project took at least seven years from general commitment to actual start. This lengthy history is not a testament to procrastination. It is about how boards work and the level of commitment required to get a seemingly simple project underway. From the beginning, this was seen as a joint project of the Minnesota and North Dakota Historical Records Advisory Boards, not just of the two state historical societies. Each board meets three times per year and often in different areas of our respective states and on our independent time schedules. In North Dakota, as a public board, we set and file our regular meeting schedule at the beginning of each year. The logistics of holding a joint meeting can be challenging. North Dakota and Minnesota are the closest of neighbors, but Bismarck is more than 400 miles distant from St. Paul. Our joint meetings tend to be in Fargo or Moorhead, twin communities on the Red River of the North. To attend a Fargo meeting, a North Dakota board member from Williston travels more than 400 miles and a Minnesota board member from the southeastern part of that state would have a similar trip. Board participation takes commitment, particularly for this type of project.

More important than scheduling and meeting logistics, however, is a convergence of goals and priorities. Our boards had similar goals and a common region. However, it is important to recognize that we reached our common goals and priorities independently and at our own pace. Documenting rural life and changing communities is seen by both boards and their coordinating institutions as a priority.

An additional challenge, and the one that prolonged the planning process, was to make the project small enough. We recognized that we could not meet all our independent objectives in this one project, so part of our task was focusing on a small enough region and a significant, but manageable issue. While our goals and priorities converged, our approaches would nonetheless diverge again at some point due to differences in the players involved in each state.

This touches on a final issue in the planning of this project. We all needed to bring something to the table. There is some disparity between the historical records programs in North Dakota and Minnesota. North Dakota would be reluctant to enter into some types of projects, and we assume our Minnesota colleagues would be reluctant as well, because they would have little to gain from the partnership. This does not imply the need for absolute equity, but rather mutual benefit and collaboration. Again, the focus and location provided that and, although Minnesota assumed the burden of being the fiscal agent for the grant, this was a collaborative project throughout.

As noted earlier, we realized that our project would have to be focused on only a portion of our common region, the Red River Valley. The basis for determining the area obviously required discussion – how big it should be, the population mix, all manner of questions. In the end, our choices reflected both the cooperative nature of the project and the independent judgment of the two boards. The area was contiguous and one in which both boards had recent experience. The factors influencing our choices were many and varied, but each state provided a slightly different approach in making their decision. North Dakota used political boundaries to determine a three county area; Minnesota chose a watershed district that defined a more general, but more diverse, area. The result was a contiguous area of manageable size which met all the criteria set out by the planning group.

Managing the project was a concern, of course. The project directors were 200-250 miles away in opposite directions. Decisions would often need to be made jointly and a project staff member located in Fargo would require direction and supervision from supervisors located in St. Paul and Bismarck. In fact, administration was not difficult. We had the good fortune to hire a project manager, Ben Leonard, who had the background, personality, and work ethic that was essential for the project. Ben was able to communicate effectively with the many groups who participated in this project – academics, farmers, main street business owners, and others. There has also been a trust and sensitivity built up over the years – perhaps all those years of planning to plan were beneficial – that made for an easy working relationship. I would acknowledge not only the hard work of Jim Fogerty of the Minnesota Historical Society, on whom so many of the administrative details fell, but also his judgement and communication. Finally, the involvement of other board members was vital to the on-going success of the project.

At the same time, there were unforeseen events, the most tragic of which was the loss of our colleague Lila Goff, project co-director and wise counsel. In addition, a flood hit Fargo the day of one of our planning meetings, inundating the lower level of the North Dakota State University Library which also happened to be the location of Ben Leonard's office.

This lengthy discussion of history and administration is to underscore that a significant part of this project was about process. One part was the process of working together and sharing perspectives and ideas; the other the process of involving a cross-section of constituents to help determine what documentation should be collected and by whom. The proposal to NHPRC summarized its purpose in part by stating:

This project proposes an interstate and interdisciplinary approach to the documentation of changes affecting agriculture and rural life. ... This project ... will bring together a unique mix of academics involved in rural and agricultural history, archivists with responsibility for documenting those areas, and a cross section of farmers and members of rural communities to better define the changes and propose a pragmatic approach to documenting them.

Our project title was "Agriculture and Rural Life: Documenting Change." We thought much would be understood through this title. Academics and popular media alike have reported the massive changes in "America's Heartland" for decades. As one example, the September 10, 2001, issue of *Newsweek* had a two-page feature on the

depopulation of small towns on the Great Plains, using the abandonment of a North Dakota town by its mayor as the prime example.

One problem, however, as noted by Robert Horton, Minnesota State Archivist, in a piece written for our project report, is that for all the quantity of writing and, we presume, research that has been done, much of it has not tapped the vast quantity of records that have been collected in the region's repositories. This issue clearly challenges our assumptions and our strategies for documenting this aspect of our states' and region's life.

Another contributor to our report, David Danbom, professor of history at North Dakota State University, reminded us that "rural" and "agriculture" are not synonymous, stressing that barely seven percent of rural people live on farms. Since many involved in the project live in or are products of the area, we did not need that reminder. Agriculture or changes in farming was never the exclusive focus of the project. In fact, board members were probably more interested in the changes in small towns and, from a records perspective, questioned how many hardware stores' or implement dealers' records were necessary or useful in documenting why rural folks are shopping at Walmart. But the reminder demonstrated that much of that outpouring of writing and much of what captures the public imagination is what is happening to the farmer and how he or she is affected by federal policies or international markets.

Much reporting would also lead readers and viewers to believe that there is a uniformity of opinion, a consensus of doom, and an unqualified resistance to the significant changes taking place. These simplistic notions ignore the fact that folks in places like the Red River Valley are agents of change as well as victims or beneficiaries. In fact it is many of these changes, generally considered beneficial, that lead observers such as Danbom to conclude that there is no "rural way of life."

All of this and more was brought into sharper focus as project staff and board members talked to academics, archivists, social service professionals, farmers, main street business owners, economic development officials, newspaper editors, and local historical society staffs during the course of the project. They at times reinforced and at other times reshaped our beliefs. Our conclusions and sometimes divergent views will, we hope, be helpful to a wider audience. What we are witnessing in the Red River Valley or in the Great Plains is also occurring in Iowa and Indiana. As archivists we will decide what records to seek and what to discard. Through this project we have sought to improve our approach by gaining input from people who are living this change as well as from those who would document and interpret it. We have also sought potential partners, knowing that many players have a role in determining what should be and what will be collected. The Minnesota Board will be using the project findings in its own major review and planning process that begins next year. The North Dakota Board will use the findings to help plan its activities and to help evaluate the priorities it has maintained since its 1995 planning project.

The project brought into sharper focus the different roles archivists play as representatives of their employing institution and as members of a State Historical Records Advisory Board. A key issue in the project proposal was how well historical repositories were documenting significant changes in the region studied and, by implication, in similar regions throughout the country (and with the Canadian perspective, internationally). From the reviews of literature and the discussions with

academic researchers, as well as the review of use noted in companion essays, the repositories are doing a reasonably good job. Academic researchers have difficulty projecting research needs beyond the subject of the moment and are not familiar enough with sources generally to provide much guidance. Most would probably agree that the “big picture” appears to be documented adequately in the sources already collected.

The “big picture” tends to be a bit sterile, however. Therefore we are urged to produce more oral history. If the potential author’s subject is women in agriculture, the gentle criticism is the relatively few diaries of farm women in the collections. For academic purposes, use of many archival collections is concentrated in a few widely-spaced investigations. Pressed for space and increasingly obligated to justify costs, archivists ask how many hardware stores, how many women’s clubs, how many grain elevators, how many farms need to be documented?

Most users of archives are not attempting to answer why fewer people live in small towns or on farms, or whether federal farm policy is slowing or speeding that change. Most are seeking information about their great-grandparents. This history is intensely personal, as is the history of Ada, Minnesota, or Hillsboro, North Dakota. While the records of a closed hardware store in Ada may suffice for a study of business in declining small towns, they will be of little value for telling the history of Hillsboro.

How the SHRAB reconciles these different interests is in part the object of this project. The North Dakota SHRAB has placed an emphasis on training of mostly volunteer staff at small repositories to help them make better collecting decisions as well as improve care and access. The project has reinforced that approach, but has added urgency to two other components. One is the need for more professional assistance and consultation to smaller repositories. The second is increased use of oral history, an area in which North Dakota lags far behind Minnesota. As the SHRABs move forward with their planning, using the experience gained from this project, more of the project should be translated into specific actions.

Finally, there is one other recurrent theme— the role of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). It is a truism that state historical records advisory boards would not exist but for the NHPRC. While some would undoubtedly argue that we would do just as well without them, in Minnesota and North Dakota these boards serve a significant state-wide coordinating function. With support from NHPRC, these boards have assessed and planned and occasionally served as the catalyst for significant records preservation projects. Without the NHPRC, this joint project would not have happened. I doubt that it would have been conceived.

Gerald Newborg

FROM INDEPENDENCE TO INTERDEPENDENCE: RURAL PERSPECTIVES ON CHANGE REPORT

Project Overview

Aware that this is a time of swift change for rural America, Minnesota and North Dakota archivists sought to ensure modern rural life and agriculture were being preserved adequately and accurately in their institutions. Understanding as well the common issues faced by the two states, focus immediately shifted to the Red River Valley, the rural region which formed the common border.

The Minnesota and North Dakota State historical records advisory boards engaged in the first joint project of any kind between two such organizations funded by the National Historic Publications and Records Commission. The *Agriculture and Rural Life* project represents a unique, real-time assessment of documentation strategy and societal change in the Red River Valley border region. Proceeding without a model, the two SHRABs approached the subject carefully, with minimal preconceptions and restraints. In doing so, the purpose was five fold:

- involve area residents,
- discover changes occurring in regional agriculture and rural life,
- analyze documentation presently produced and used in the area,
- assess the current documentation available in regional collecting institutions, and
- address collection strategies already in place.

Project Theory: What is Rural?

The United States Census Bureau defines “rural” communities simply as those with fewer than 2,500 residents. The agency’s lengthy formal definition remarks more on what rural is not, rather than what it is. The Red River Valley region included in this project is by all accounts, Census and otherwise, rural. The largest city in the study area is only 1,600. This proclamation however, is incomplete. The most drastic changes are felt outside city limits. Some Valley townships have lost over half of their farmers.¹ The Census Bureau goes a little further, classifying an area as “frontier” if density falls below six residents per square mile. The majority of our project area, outside the few population centers, falls under the frontier distinction.

With increasingly stark divisions in the severity of “ruralness,” a more complex and flexible definition is needed. Carl Kraenzel, a rural sociologist at Montana State University and a North Dakota native published his seminal work, *The Great Plains in Transition*, in 1955. He accurately predicted the rapid depopulation and economic problems many plains communities would face over the next fifty years. Describing the region in terms of *yonland* and *sutland*, Kraenzel saw dispersed small towns surviving along transportation routes in the *sutland*, but separated by increasing areas of largely

¹. Isern. Thomas. *The Cultures of Agriculture on the North American Plains* (Marshall, MN: Southwest State University, 1999, 4); Isern’s statements cover the Great Plains in general, but project interviews with area farmers suggest that the same comments apply to the Red River Valley.

unpopulated *yonland*. Kraenzel visualized pockets of population and influence across the plains. These communities would provide services to residents and carve out spheres of influence around them, much like the nucleus of a cell. North Dakota State University History Professor and Plains author Tom Isern feels, “this is where we are now - we have fulfilled Carl Kraenzel’s predictions. It is now possible to live a good life on the plains. But it is not a rural life. Most of the population lives in these small cities....”²

Perhaps a more accurate way to describe Red River Valley demographics is to define a small town. Otto Hoiberg published *Exploring The Small Community* the same year as Kraenzel’s *Great Plains in Transition*. In it, he provided a most complete and logical description of small community function.

It is a natural area. The small community ordinarily does not conform to legally defined boundaries of any kind. It comprises an incorporated or unincorporated trade center with a surrounding agricultural area which may take any shape, depending on factors such as the location of adjoining trade centers, rivers, and highways. Regardless of size and shape, it consists of townspeople and farm people, living together in what might be termed *a social watershed*...

It provides a core of services. A second characteristic of the small community is that it provides at least a minimum core of services for its people. No rigid list can be established as necessary for a social grouping to qualify as a community, but certainly some services of an economic, educational, religious, and recreational nature will ordinarily be included...

It is characterized by a sense of belonging. People who live in a community have a feeling of belonging together. There is a generalized emotional involvement which serves to reinforce, as it were, the bonds which are established among community members through their business, church, school, and other activities. This is true in a very special sense of the small community with its close personal relationships. In an urban setting the individual citizen also has a feeling of ‘belonging,’ but it is a relatively impersonal reaction which is hardly reflected in his attitude toward the fellow citizen he meets on the street.³

Throughout the Red River Valley and Great Plains, whether viewing the region as *yonland* and *sutland*, or small town and rural, the entire area has become increasingly interdependent with large metropolitan centers. *The People of Rural America*, a census monograph published in 1960, regarded rural America “as representing the hinterland of a series of metropolitan regions. The rural portions of the Nation are viewed as being interdependent with the metropolitan centers, but the power to integrate, order, and

² Isern, Thomas. *The Cultures of Agriculture on the North American Plains* (Marshall, MN: Southwest State University, 1999, 6).

³ Hoiberg, Otto G. *Exploring the Small Community* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955, 9-10).

control resides in the large centers.”⁴ In the Red River Valley, Fargo/Moorhead, Grand Forks/East Grand Forks, and Winnipeg exert influence over a huge area. Towns like Ada, Minnesota, and even Cooperstown, North Dakota, have become bedroom communities, with significant numbers of their residents commuting to Fargo/Moorhead for work. Greater still are the numbers of rural residents traveling to urban areas to shop, seek medical care, or take in entertainment. Unable to compete with large chain stores and the diverse options of metro areas, many small town businesses are forced to close. Entire communities have to adapt to stay competitive. Cities like Hope, North Dakota, with a population of fewer than 250, constructed golf courses in hopes of attracting Fargo residents. Hendrum, Minnesota, located less than thirty minutes from Fargo, is giving away free city lots and utilities to anyone building a new home.

Rural life has become more complex and dynamic over the last half-century. Advancements in transportation have brought urban areas closer. Satellite television and the Internet have closed the information gap for hinterland residents. However, the growing gap between rich and poor, decreased rural services, a perceived condescension towards rural people, and lack of trust have widened the gap between the Fargos and Adas. When Sheyenne Valley farmer Keven Lunde was asked in a recent oral interview if he felt more or less isolated than he did twenty years ago, he answered “both,” reflecting the intricate relationship today between rural, small town, and urban residents.

Geographic Context

Today the Red River Valley encompasses over 40,000 square miles and includes parts of Minnesota, North Dakota, and Manitoba. The Red River flows north over 315 miles from Lake Traverse to Lake Winnipeg. The Valley’s geography, topography, and climate have contributed greatly to the region’s cyclical boom-and-bust history.

Kent Myers, in his memoir *The Witness of Combines* wrote of the Red River Valley: “at the border of Minnesota and North Dakota, near Moorhead and Fargo, lies the most minimalist of all landscapes, a place with which not even the simplicity of the sea can compete, a place where flatness has been perfected.”⁵ The vast flood plain that exists today is a remnant of an ancient lakebed formed nearly 12,000 years ago. Sixty miles wide at its peak, the Red River Basin gradually rises into undulating hills, formed over thousands of years by fluctuating lake levels. Beginning about 8,000 years ago, as Lake Agassiz retreated northward and temperatures rose, tall grass prairie dominated the landscape.⁶

The extremely fertile grasslands drew wholesale European settlement with the arrival of the railroads beginning in 1870. The widespread availability of Northern

⁴ Hathaway, Dale, J. Allen Beegle, and W. Keith Bryant. *People of Rural America, A 1960 Census Monograph* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968, 1-2).

⁵ Myers, Kent. *The Witness of Combines* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, 69-70).

⁶ Chapman, Kim Allen, Adelheid Fischer, and Mary Kinsella Ziegenhagen. *Valley of Grass: Tallgrass Prairie and Parkland of the Red River Region* (St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 1998, 3-4); Teller, J.T., Lee Clayton, ed. *Glacial Lake Agassiz* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983, 3-5).

Pacific Railway land and government homesteads fueled the boom. Extremely productive, almost perfectly level, and free of trees and rocks, the Red River Valley lent itself to large-scale agriculture immediately. Bonanza farms, large mechanized corporate agriculture, operated in the Valley beginning in 1875. Responsible for producing thousands of bushels of grain every year, the bonanzas capitalized on rising wheat prices, low production costs, and transportation innovations to compete profitably on the world market. By the 1920s, Valley farmers began growing sugar beets in significant numbers. In 1925, just under five thousand acres were harvested. Twenty years later over 35,000 acres were planted. Grown on contract under more secure price supports, sugar beets were less susceptible to market fluctuations than grain or livestock prices. Beets, along with small grains and soybeans, continue to anchor Valley agriculture today.⁷

The project focused on two specific geographic portions of the Valley. The Wild Rice Watershed District comprises portions of Polk, Clay, Norman, Becker, Mahanomen, and Clearwater Counties in Minnesota. Spanning over eighty miles from west to east, the terrain flows from Red River flood plain through rolling hills into the aspen and hardwood forests of Minnesota lakes country. Very rural, Ada in Norman County is the area's largest city with a population of 1,600. The entire District comprises a total population of approximately 15,000, but has seen out-migration of 4.8 percent over the past decade. The North Dakota project area covers Traill, Steele, and Griggs Counties. Eighty-one miles from east to west, the project area includes the Valley and rockier more hilly terrain to the west. Sparsely populated, only 5.6 people per square mile on average, the three counties have two major population centers: Hillsboro and Cooperstown. Hillsboro, located along the Red River has 1,500 residents. Cooperstown, the Griggs' County seat, boasts a population of 1,200. The total area has 13,500 inhabitants, but has seen a significant 9.33 percent drop in population in the last ten years.⁸

The two project areas were chosen to illustrate different delineations in the region: political and geographical. The Wild Rice Watershed District represents a physical boundary including parts of several counties. The North Dakota region was divided purely along political lines, and is comprised of three entire counties. Neither area was treated differently, but both are legitimate ways to divide the subject area. The Red River, in many ways the focal point of our work, is both a physical and political boundary separating two states. Despite this, there is close personal and economic interaction across the border between residents, especially along major highways that span the river.

Historiography

Since the late 1980s, scholars and writers have begun to report a more complex view of agriculture and rural life. The overwhelming undercurrent in previous scholarship leading up to the last fifteen years portrayed agriculture and rural life romantically and one-dimensionally. Politically charged books like John Shover's *First Majority, Last Minority*, 1976 and Wendell Berry's *The Unsettling of America*, 1977, while excellent

⁷. Drache, Hiram. *The Day of the Bonanza* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1964, 4-6, 208-209); Shoptaugh, Terry. *Roots of Success* (Fargo, ND: Institute for Regional Studies, 1997, 41-42, 71-72).

⁸. U.S. Census *QuickFacts* compilations

texts, adopted a “sky is falling” attitude towards American agriculture and rural perseverance. Berry’s occasionally romantic oversimplifications made it impossible to divorce agriculture from rural, and saw the apparent death of both as an American tragedy. Shover and Berry both propagated popularly held misconceptions of rural self-sufficiency, environmental harmony, higher moral standing, and simplified living.

The three decades preceding the 1980s were not entirely bereft of more analytical assessments of rural conditions. Otis Duncan and Albert Reiss Jr. published *Social Characteristics of Urban and Rural Communities*, 1950, one of the first studies to compare and contrast rural and urban census statistics in 1956. The modern “rurban” communities they discovered uncovered completely new problems and issues in small town society, and the authors were forced to reevaluate the previous antiquated definition of “community.” Edward Higbee exposed similar outdated beliefs concerning agriculture in his 1963 publication, *Farms and Farmers in an Urban Age*. Higbee illustrated the world-scale and technology-driven reality of modern farming. In the 1970s, David Danbom expands Higbee’s contention in a history of American agriculture from 1900-1930. *The Resisted Revolution*, 1979, chronicles the rapid evolution of farming, and the industrialization, professionalization, and consolidation those changes brought. According to Danbom, farming became more market driven, monocultural, and capitalized. All this occurred at some expense to individual, family, and community relationships. John Opie, in *The Law of the Land*, published almost ten years later in 1987, studies the effect of American agrarian myths on federal farm policy over the last 200 years. Opie contends that American agriculture has never revolved around yeoman ideals, and land policy has favored speculative private industry since its inception in 1785. A highly readable companion to Danbom’s more social approach, Opie analyzes the dichotomy between the intents and effects of federal farm policy.

By incorporating history with other disciplines, or expanding their focus, today’s monographs, literature, and memoirs have continued to capture greater and more complete pictures of life. Daniel Nelson’s *Farm and Factory*, a history of midwestern workers from 1880 to 1990 chronicles the simultaneous steady growth of agriculture and industry. Nelson traces the economic, technological, and social ramifications of increased industrialization and urbanization of the Midwest. Ronald Kline tackled similar issues in *Consumers in the Country*, published in 2000. He argues that farm and rural life changed dramatically in America during the first half of the twentieth century. Kline’s four urbanizing technologies– telephone, electricity, radio, and automobiles– spurred rapid change. Rural Americans adopted many urban amenities, but far from being passive consumers, they made conscious choices based on need. However, for the first time rural Americans began to look more like urban Americans in their standard of living, desires, and possessions. Kline illuminates this important change and the context behind it.

Recent scholarship has expanded to include groups not previously discussed at length. This is especially true in considering rural women. Kathy Jellison explores technology and the changing roles of rural farm women in her 1994 book *Entitled to Power*. Jellison tracks the proliferation of both modern home appliances and farm machinery, and their effect on gender roles from 1913 to 1963. In her thorough quantitative analysis, Jellison chronicles inter-generational change caught in the midst of modern laborsaving devices. Mothers who largely kept house without electricity, running water, and other conveniences gave way to daughters who had more modern homes.

Instead of saving time, these modern farm women were just as busy, if not busier, than their mothers and grandmothers. World War II issued in a period of increased reliance on women to produce agricultural products, and they used farm machinery more heavily. Despite growing industrialization, farm women continued to factor heavily in production, and resisted giving up their control outside the home. Mary Kinnear also looks at farm women, but focuses more on hired labor in *A Female Economy*. Published in 1998, Kinnear studies women in Manitoba, Canada, from 1870 to 1970, and the emerging idea of an independent woman.

While scholars like Jellison and Kline were debunking the myths of social control and family dynamics in rural America, others denounced the antiquated views held by government agencies controlling state and federal agricultural policy. The best example of this is *Sacred Cows and Hot Potatoes: Agrarian Myths in Agricultural Policy*. Like Opie's *The Law of the Land*, the authors attacked myths held by government for decades. They rail against the idea that rural and agriculture is one in the same. The overwhelming majority of Red River Valley residents, as with the rural residents documented in this book, play no part in agricultural production. Agrarian values are based on profit and maximizing returns just like urban corporations. There are no average family farms, and basing policy on this ideal only leads to failure. Extremely critical of past and current policy, the authors dispel myths and misrepresentations in order to bring about a shift in policy towards farming and rural America.

John Allen, rural sociologist at the University of Nebraska, and Don Dillman, director of the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University, dispel the idea that rural communities are no longer viable in *Against All Odds* (1994). Bremer, the pseudonym of an actual Washington state community is the subject of this thorough, extremely well done portrait of a modern rural town. Bremer, a town of only one thousand residents, has managed to remain vibrant. Community members, businesses, and local government have worked together to ensure their continued success. They have managed to do so without outside financial assistance. *Against All Odds* is a one-of-a-kind study of rural success, and hopefully signals more scholarship of its kind to come.

Farmers themselves have also begun to publish more actively. Perhaps the most significant of these is Dean Carlson's *So This Is Farming* (1988). A grain and sugarbeet farmer near Kennedy, Minnesota, in the Red River Valley, Carlson documented one planting season through a diary and extensive daily notes. This is the only contemporary published blow-by-blow, as it happens account of modern agriculture in the eyes of an operator. It provides an extremely intimate look at one farmer's experience. Another farmer, Brent Olson, of west-central Minnesota, wrote *The Lay of the Land: A View From The Prairie* in 1998. A collection of syndicated columns, Olson reflects on his life and his rural community. Both give firsthand glimpses at modern life in the region, unavailable anywhere else.

Paul Gruchow and Kathleen Norris, both essayists and residents of the prairie, define what their rural environments mean to them in a deeply emotional sense. Kathleen Norris's *Dakota*, now the benchmark of modern rural essays, tells of her spiritual connection to her home in Lemmon, South Dakota. In *Grass Roots*, Paul Gruchow chastises urbanites' detachment from the natural world. This is his environmental memoir and it details his entire life and simultaneous connection with the natural environment.

Residing mostly on the prairies of western Minnesota, Gruchow lauds the importance of discovering one's own place and its necessity in our daily lives.

Local writers are well represented in the project bibliography, producing notable and accurate portrayals of area life. *Unwanted Bread*, a pictorial collection of interviews conducted with North Dakota residents that was published in 2000 is reflective of such work. North Dakota State University History professors David Danbom and Tom Isern have published numerous nationally received publications on agriculture and rural life. *Born in the Country*, published by David Danbom in 1995, is arguably the best history of rural America. Minnesota State University - Moorhead History professor Stephen Hoffbeck's recent book, *The Haymakers* chronicles five Minnesota farm families over more than a one hundred year period. Hoffbeck uses local, regional, and state archives extensively to produce a thorough and accurate portrayal of the economic and social implications of technological changes in agriculture. Kent Meyer's *Witness of Combines* details his coming of age on a Minnesota farm during the 1960s and 1970s. Dennis Clausen's account of growing up in western Minnesota during the Depression, *Prairie Son*, was published a year after Meyer's memoir in 1999. Tim Murphy's *Set the Plowshare Deep* combines poetry and prose with artwork by regional artist Charles Beck to illustrate his Red River Valley experience. Conducting a contemporary project is difficult. It is hard to guess where the historiography might take us in ten or twenty years. But if recent examples are any indication, scholars and literary writers will continue to document regional experiences in accurate and compelling ways.

Project Components

Preliminary research was key in preparation for the interest group sessions, as well as in evaluating current historiography and Internet resources available in the areas of agriculture and rural life. Two major research projects were undertaken. The first was an annotated bibliography. Monographs, organizational reports, government documents, articles, and literature were reviewed. These provided historical, economic, sociological, ecological, demographic, and literary perspectives into agriculture, rural life, and the Red River Valley region itself. The result was an annotated list of around 175 important texts, articles, and pamphlets. A survey of the World Wide Web provided both background information and important contacts within Valley communities. Over 200 sites maintained by national, international, and local groups were compiled. This list, along with key contacts, provided the first inroads into the project's focus area and many possible interest group participants.

Interest Group Meetings

Over the period of four and a half months, project leaders met with Red River Valley residents at several venues in both Minnesota and North Dakota across the project area. Professionals, civic leaders, farmers, retirees, politicians, teachers, and business owners came together for diverse and frank discussions about the status of modern rural life. Nearly seventy participants were involved during the project's eight interest group sessions. Meetings were constructed around occupational commonalities, such as farming, academics, and social service providers; and geographic locations, like Cooperstown, North Dakota, when a wider cross-section of community residents was invited. Each meeting brought different questions and discoveries, yet every individual

brought thoughtful and eloquent perspectives. Interest groups tackled a wide range of rural, agricultural, and archival questions. Many were not directly answered, and illustrate the complex realities of documenting modern change in the Red River Valley.

Holding relatively few meetings meant talking to only a few handfuls of area residents. The project goal was not to scientifically assemble participants according to demographic statistics. Rather, it was to talk with interested residents willing to share their stories that we felt represented the characteristics of larger groups. However, project personnel were cognizant of the need for diversity in our panels, and tried to get a mix of viewpoints, ages, backgrounds, and professions. Using farmers as an example, a range of perspectives was obtained. Young farmers have different reactions and insights than retired ones, and those with viable farms feel contrastingly to others who lost their farms. We also incorporated lifetime residents with new arrivals, professionals with nonprofessionals, and so forth.

The project benefitted from two especially good contacts, both Valley residents, one on the Minnesota Historic Records Advisory Board and a North Dakotan with museum experience. Through them we were able to contact a few likely interest group participants. The Internet also proved very useful. In the case of the Cooperstown and Ada meetings, project planners indicated the types of individuals they wanted to see present, such as local government and business owners. Through the Internet likely candidates were identified and contacted. Because the project area is so rural, participants were fairly easy to find. There were usually certain individuals who immediately rose to the forefront. This allowed choosing among perhaps twenty, instead of hundreds. The archivists and scholars were chosen from area institutions, and appeared rather obviously. More potential invites emerged after initial community contacts were made. Participants constantly recommended their friends, professional contacts, or relatives. In nearly every case those recommended individuals came to the meetings and provided excellent insight and commentary.

Group members were more than willing to drive long distances and donate their time. A casual atmosphere was created during the meetings— similar to other community or organizational gatherings with which group members were familiar. Meetings generally lasted about three hours. Project planners and SHRAB members introduced the project, about an hour-and-a-half was allowed for discussion, and then lunch was provided. Meetings were held at area cafes or a downtown Fargo conference center.

The seemingly unending source of quality participants was remarkable. Many of them were highly educated. Several had come back or immigrated from metropolitan areas all over the country. All of them expressed a heartfelt desire to live in the region, and a genuine appreciation for their rural lifestyle. For them, living where they do is a conscious choice, and not an act of fate or lack of opportunity. It was logistically impossible to invite everyone, but almost everyone contacted was very willing to help. The project manager was always treated well, and with genuine interest. At most meetings, about 75 percent of those contacted actually attended, an impressive statistic.

Meetings:

Academic Interest Group; July 17-18, 2001; Fargo, ND

Professional educators from North Dakota State University, University of Minnesota-Morris, Bemidji State University, University of North Dakota, and Plains Art Museum discussed the needs of professional researchers, historiography, and project theory.

Archivist Interest Group; July 24-25, 2001; Fargo, ND

Archivists representing the two state historical societies, regional university archives, and two local museums gathered to discuss collecting strategies, physical realities, and cooperative possibilities.

Local Historical Society Interest Group; September 18, 2001; Hillsboro, ND

Representatives from eight local museums met with project organizers to air concerns, talk about their needs, and open lines of communications to facilitate future collaboration.

Social Service Interest Group; September 19, 2001; Fargo, ND

Social service representatives from government and non-profit Valley groups came together to discuss their changing job duties, as well as the evolving needs of their clientele and the communities they serve.

Ada Interest Group; September 20, 2001; Ada, MN

Community members from Ada representing local government, small business, education, agriculture, and local organizations openly discussed the changes affecting Ada, Minnesota.

Cooperstown Interest Group; November 16, 2001; Cooperstown, ND

Similar format to the Ada meeting, residents of Cooperstown, North Dakota, shared similar information. Cooperstown has a larger population and lies further from Fargo/Moorhead, which is perhaps the reason for slightly different concerns aired by the group.

Farmer's Interest Group; November 30, 2001; Finley, ND

A retired farmer, practicing farmer, extension agent, and owners of a bed and breakfast talked about their experiences and perceptions of agriculture, their community, and their views of the future.

Farmer's Interest Group; December 1, 2001; Twin Valley, MN

Current and retired farmers shared their experiences in agriculture over the last half-century.

Institutional Surveys

There are roughly twenty collecting institutions in the Valley, ranging from university archive, to professional local society, to volunteer run county museum. While nearly all possess documents, collections vary greatly in accessibility, organization, and preservation. Preliminary surveys of archives within the specific project area were

completed. These included seven county historical societies in Minnesota and three in North Dakota; two university archives in Minnesota, two in North Dakota, and one in Manitoba; and two independent organizations in North Dakota. The institutions reflect a wide degree of professionalization, funding, space, and scope of collections.

Mahnomen County Historical Society, in Mahnomen, Minnesota, has no formal budget and is currently located in a few back rooms in the courthouse basement. Unable to hire staff or even pay for phone service, material is kept out in the open under no specific filing system. Though collections are scattered, there is a microfilm reader for accessing the *Mahnomen Pioneer* (1914-1991). Miscellaneous photographs, published histories, scrapbooks, and various other records are available. Last years attendance reached 120, but the number of people visiting solely to conduct research is unclear. On the other side of the regional reality is the Otter Tail County Historical Society. Their library holds a vast amount of material including extensive microfilm collections, over 30,000 photographs, business records, township records, organizational papers, and school records. Collections are environmentally controlled, secure, and logically arranged. The Society also employs a full-time archivist and part-time library assistants who aid an estimated 1,200 researchers per year.

Although they represent extremes, the preceding institutions are representative of the materials found in Valley collections. Most have newspapers on microfilm, some type of township or county records, plat books, photographs, and published histories. Many local genealogical groups compile cemetery books, obituary files, birth and death lists, and naturalization indexes. Business records, organizational papers, and personal papers are present, but in smaller quantities. None of the local societies had formalized collections strategies pertaining to archives. Collecting seems to be driven by patron need and staff preference. Although societies like Otter Tail and Clay County in Minnesota have had long-term employees who have molded the collections in a sensible way, others with higher turnover do not keep as meticulous records, and often end up with duplicate or redundant material. The overwhelming patronage of these collections is for genealogy. Kathy Evavold, Otter Tail County Historical Society archivist, stated 90 percent of library use is for genealogical purposes. This demand drives collecting for all the county historical societies in both states.

University archives in the area see themselves as both a repository for University documents and regional collecting institution, and have formal policies dictating future collecting to preserve that mission. The University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and Minnesota State University - Moorhead have wonderful regional collections including oral interviews, personal collections, business records, organizational material, visual materials, and published resources. These collections are properly stored, attended by highly professional staff, and heavily used. Potential patrons can search material references online before visiting.

Every institution in the Red River Valley is limited by money and space in some way. Future plans for the various institutions include expansion, new buildings, extending online resources, inventorying, improving storage conditions, and cataloging. The smaller institutions look toward the state and larger university archives for grants, training, and technical support. Many expressed an interest in workshops and collections help. Among the state societies and Valley universities, archivists struggled with non-traditional document storage, such as email and web sites. With so many institutions in a small

geographic area, competition and efficient distribution of incoming materials is also a concern. For example, the Fargo/Moorhead area alone has three academic repositories and one professional county historical society, all with active regional collecting missions. The archivist interest group was very eager to discuss ways in which organizations could work together to support cooperative collecting and lending programs, although all agreed actual implementation of those concepts were a long way off. In the short term, participants agreed that increased communication among them would be beneficial. Our meeting with local societies brought together many employees and board members of geographically linked institutions, most of whom had never met before. Continuing this dialogue would foster more chances for cooperative ventures, training, and efficient collecting.

Oral Interviews

A short series of oral interviews grew as an offshoot of the general interest group sessions. A few individuals who seemed to have particularly thorough comments that we wished to have participated in a more in-depth discussion. Four personal dialogues were completed with a farmer, newspaper editor, social service provider, and agribusiness owner. Interviews lasted about an hour. Questions were asked about their professions, community, personal lives, records creation, and their previous experience with regional historic records collections. Perhaps the most important questions asked how they themselves wished to be portrayed and viewed by the local, state, regional, and national public.

Again, our participants showed genuine hospitality and cooperation. Farmer Keven Lunde from Cooperstown, North Dakota, showed me around his farm, allowed me to take pictures, and introduced me to his family. His mother even served me the best waffles with homemade syrup I've ever eaten. The Lunde's and others have been so willing to share not only their stories, but open up their lives to us throughout the project.

Interstate Coordination

As the first joint project funded by the NHPRC, this project became a test case for interstate cooperation and coordination. Separated only by a modest river, the two states come together with two very different political realities. In terms of social consciousness, the Red River Valley factors high on the minds of North Dakotans. With roughly one-half the state's population in the eastern quarter of the state, even the rural Valley counties receive attention from North Dakota government and media. The Minnesota side lies far from the population centers of the twin cities. Because of this, the western part of the state feels increasingly isolated and weary of their "out-state" moniker. Both states have adopted Fargo/Moorhead as their regional center, but Minnesotans remain tied to distant Minneapolis and St. Paul for identification and validation. Rural North Dakota Valley communities appear to feel less isolated, and probably enjoy far more urban consideration than their western counterparts.

State funding, however, seems to favor Minnesota Valley residents. On average, Minnesota appears to devote more money to local government, schools, organizations and institutions than North Dakota. The Minnesota portion of the project area is also more densely populated than the North Dakota side on the whole. Both realities translate into more developed infrastructure on the Minnesota side.

The project manager, headquartered in Fargo/Moorhead, dealt with two state agencies located over 200 miles to the east and west. Although meetings were fairly regular in Fargo and at interest group discussions, the bulk of correspondence was done over the phone and email. This worked well, but convening face-to-face is preferred. The majority of decisions and brainstorming were made in flurries of activity surrounding physical meetings. On the Minnesota side, HRAB meetings that were not held in Fargo took place in St. Paul. The North Dakota HRAB discussions were scattered all over the state. More rural, North Dakota relies less on one metropolitan area, which fosters a more cooperative sense among the committee's dispersed members. However, far-flung meetings served as a disadvantage when travel times exponentially exceeded actual meeting length. On the other side, the same could be said for those always traveling to St. Paul.

During the interim between physical visits, the project manager addressed a list of goals and priorities, and could communicate through email or via telephone. This worked well, but short delays and lag time were sometimes inevitable if too much time elapsed between meetings.

The area's ties in culture, economics and demographics far outweigh the differences. All too frequent flooding serves as a reminder of our bond and softens the Red River's political division. This project was an important benchmark for archivists, but it was considerably less daring than it may appear to the outsider. Minnesota commuters travel everyday to work in Fargo. Each fall hundreds of North Dakota farmers in lumbering trucks make thousands of trips across the Red River to form huge mountains of sugarbeets on the Minnesota side. This interstate relationship only grows as residents become increasingly mobile and the regional economy evolves. Without a joint project both states would be missing a huge portion of the Red River Valley story. This project serves as the first step, and more efforts will be made to link archival communities sharing the same destiny.

Agriculture and Rural Change

"Life is about change. Life is dynamic," remarked Keven Lunde, a young articulate farmer from Cooperstown, North Dakota, during an interest group meeting in late November 2000. Neither blindsided or overly resentful of change, Red River Valley residents have adjusted and adapted to natural forces, economic factors, and demographic shifts for generations. Not unique to the past few decades, this area has experienced and lived with change, both good and bad, since Europeans first arrived in the late nineteenth century.⁹

However, Red River Valley communities appear to currently be at a crossroads. Subtle trends present for fifty years or more have accelerated to reveal the serious consequences of out-migration, school consolidation, and the farm crisis. Conversely, exciting improvements in technology and transportation now make it more possible for rural industry to compete and prosper on a world market. Communities struggle to develop and implement planning strategies that will preserve their rural way of life while attracting new residents, business, and industry to their area. Paul Voisey biographies a small southern Alberta community in his 1988 book, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie*

⁹. Farmer's Interest Group Meeting. Finley, North Dakota. November 30, 2000.

Community. He believes four factors: heritage, metropolis, frontier, and environment govern the history and future viability of rural towns like Vulcan. Voisey's revelations hold true for our project area as well. Tight knit social groups and long-standing traditions can make it difficult for some small towns to welcome newcomers. Griggs County, North Dakota, Extension Educator Brian Gion commented on his community's need to recruit new residents, but their unwillingness to accept them socially.¹⁰ As the Red River Valley and the rest of America continue to rapidly urbanize, small towns are ever increasingly pitted against metropolitan areas in competition for goods, services, and resources. Once able to coexist more autonomously, rural areas are more dependent than ever on larger cities, and their future viability is directly at stake.

Reflecting on the project's findings as a whole, certain themes are evident. The themes represent both the actual changes affecting these residents and the emotional responses change generates. Rural life in the Valley is undoubtedly evolving, and has been for decades. Main street businesses began to decline in many towns right after WWII. Agriculture, increasingly industrialized over the past sixty years, requires less human labor and allows greater acreage per operation. Advancements in technology and infrastructure have lessened actual and perceived distances to growing urban centers. While rural children have always left for cities, they began to do so in greater numbers. Although change is nothing new to these rural residents, things have reached a crescendo in the past decade. Towns like Ada, Minnesota, have gone from 2,400 residents twenty years ago to 1,600. Out migration has accelerated, and without a remaining population base to absorb it, the effects have been devastating. Towns have seen a drop in local business, tax bases, school enrollment, and general economic opportunity.

Roger Bakken, owner of Bakken's Hardware in Cooperstown, North Dakota, now wants to retire. He owned his store free-and-clear for years, and is a life-long area resident. With low overhead he was able to have an adequate income, and his love for the community kept him around. However, more people shopping in Fargo translate into less income for his store. He worries that no new owner, faced with rent and decreasing business, will find his store to be a good investment. Roger's cohorts must have similar concerns, as two more prominent Cooperstown businesses are currently for sale.

Ada's JC Penney store left in the mid 1970s. Down to one grocery store, very little retail shopping is done in town. Larger chain stores like Cenex and UBC are able to offer products for less than family businesses because of their corporate purchasing power. However, they are not as emotionally attached to the community and are more sensitive to falling profit margins. Banking has seen similar consolidation and closings. By forming a cooperative, one Ada bank has managed to remain locally owned, but this is not a guarantee.

Dwindling populations have resulted in shrinking tax bases for smaller towns. North Dakota tax law favors urban areas according to participants in Finley. Low state income tax and home-rule charters that localize sales tax revenues have widened the economic gap between Fargo and outlying communities. Keven Lunde, interest group participant in Finley, North Dakota, is unhappy with what he feels is an unfair burden on landowners under the North Dakota tax system. Towns have struggled to maintain services for smaller, rapidly aging populations. In general, these residents require more resources than they contribute. Small communities struggle to maintain and hold on to

¹⁰ Ibid.

local healthcare facilities and other health-based services. With more residents working outside rural areas, they have become more dependent on urban service providers. Doctors, nurses, and psychologists are expensive. Paying them for hours of “windshield time” has made them too expensive for some communities.

The absence of young families hurts. It was heard repeatedly throughout several sessions, that young families drive the economy. Without them things stagnate. They are the biggest group of consumers, have children, and possess the energy to participate in community groups. Nowhere is this more evident than in the schools. Consolidation has hurt towns that lost their school, which was often the focal point of community life. Small, shrinking districts struggle to maintain buildings, pay staff, and provide good opportunities in the face of continued federal and state cuts, along with dropping property tax incomes.

The entire Red River Valley economy was built on agriculture. Technology, markets, and federal policies have made farms larger. With fewer farmers surrounding rural communities, the amount of money being spent in town declines as well. In Griggs County, North Dakota, over one-quarter of the county’s arable land is in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This program pays farmers to keep erosion-susceptible land out of production. Its effect on the local economy has been detrimental. Often absentee-owned, CRP land is fallow, redirecting money that would have been otherwise spent locally in production. Communities like Cooperstown and Finley have seen a drop in agriculturally-based businesses like implement dealers and co-ops, making it harder for remaining farmers to conduct local business. Because of guaranteed federal payments, land rent is kept artificially high, making costs prohibitive on cropland outside CRP.

Current farmers face other challenges as well. Donald Holte of Grandin, North Dakota, recently gave up farming. Because he was his own operator, he had to pay health insurance premiums, which came to \$8,500 a year. As profit margins tighten, family expenses overwhelm some. According to Holte, farmers love agriculture and their lifestyle, and therefore are sometimes unwilling to look at the reality that it has become unprofitable for them. Many younger farm children are able to look at the situation less emotionally, and choose to pursue more lucrative urban careers. Brian Gion, Steele County North Dakota Extension Agent, blames poor marketing skills on many farm liquidations. Gion believes that to survive in today’s agricultural business climate, one must be a full-time expert marketer. Without that, Gion claims, great crops aren’t going to save anyone.

While rural life faces many problems, not all change has been negative. Technology has exacerbated out migration in some ways, but it also offers salvation to small towns. Computers and the Internet now make telecommuting a reality, allowing former residents to return to the Red River Valley. This, coupled with improvements in transportation make rural communities a more viable location for industry. Today, Red River Valley residents have come to expect a standard of living comparable to urban dwellers, but still maintain a small town way of life.

Those to whom we spoke in our meetings are active participants in molding their communities. Some, like Cooperstown School Superintendent Wade Faul and Ada City Clerk Dan Johanncek were extremely knowledgeable of Internet technology, and their need to capitalize on its benefits. Johanncek boasted about Ada’s lines of fiber optic

cable, absent in bigger towns such as Crookston, that appeal to industry looking to relocate. Faul discussed intricate plans to acquire high-speed connections to facilitate distance learning and telemedicine. Many, like Faul, who participated in the Cooperstown discussion, are active members of the Griggs/Steele Empowerment Zone, a program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Their group was the first to be awarded a zone based on rural out-migration. All previous groups had been in inner-city areas. The result for Griggs and Steele Counties has been hundreds of thousands of dollars used to promote and protect local industry and community life.

Other towns realize the importance of recruiting new residents and business as well. Ada, located less than 45 minutes from Fargo/Moorhead, has embraced its recent role as a bedroom community. Ada recently upgraded its hospital and community center through FEMA funding. Cooperstown has worked hard to promote itself as an upscale place for young professionals. Boasting an art gallery, museum, golf course, and full service community center, the community is looking to provide similar services to those found in Fargo. This can be difficult. Most rural industry pays minimal wages. While new jobs are created, they are not high-paying careers needed to attract young professional families. In addition to good jobs and desirable amenities, communities need to build higher-level housing to bring in young professionals. To attract new growth, small town civic leaders are finding they have to provide better services, facilities, and housing, often exceeding that which is available in urban areas like Fargo/Moorhead. Arthur Crosby, contributing author to the *Encyclopedia of Rural America*, remains cautiously optimistic regarding the future of rural areas:

One can expect many rural communities to grow and prosper, while others decline or disappear altogether. Few communities will succeed as trade centers for agricultural area. However, communities that evolve to meet the needs and desires of the maturing baby boom generation can thrive... Growth communities will combine amenities such as housing designed for a maturing population, excellent recreation and entertainment opportunities, superior health services, and security and safety. Rural America's diversity and complexity will provide a variety of opportunities to meet these needs, and a rural community's ability to meet needs will determine its future success or failure.¹¹

Documentation

The most difficult subject broached by group discussion was rural documentation and records creation. Subject to the same changes, records creation in the Red River Valley areas has been drastically shaped by urban influence and new technology. Local newspapers like the *Hillsboro Banner*, *Norman County Index*, and *Griggs County Sentinel* still document area events. However, cable and satellite television has made generic nationwide programming available. Although citizens across the Valley are now bombarded with mass media on a par with their urban counterparts, this doesn't bother *Norman County Index* editor Tim Halle. In a recent interview, Halle stated that current and former residents would always patronize small town newspapers to get local

¹¹. Goreham, Gary, ed. *Encyclopedia of Rural America, Volume II* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1997).

Excerpt from: Crosby, Arthur. "Future of Rural America," pg. 298)

information. Largely ignored by metropolitan and national media, papers like Halle's are the only source for community news.

Outside of published materials, small business and farm records remain good sources. With increased corporatization and globalization, the files of larger companies headquartered outside rural areas such as American Crystal Sugar and Cenex hold important Red River Valley community information. Farmers still rely heavily on traditional resources like magazines and newspapers, but now turn to radio, television, and the Internet as well.

Computerized communication now accounts for a significant portion of document creation in the Valley. For social service providers like Doug Seiler, Southeast Human Service Center Director for North Dakota, technology has allowed him to cover a greater area in the face of budget and staff cutbacks. He relies heavily on email and his cell phone to complete daily duties. Email has become so prevalent, that nearly all the participants throughout each of the groups use it regularly. In addition, local organizations use the Internet to provide access to their activities. The Griggs/Steele Economic Development Commission, recipients of the USDA Empowerment Zone grant, posts news, job listings, committee meeting minutes, and other announcements on their site. It changes often, and is an excellent resource for following organizational movements. While the use of technology is growing rapidly among Valley residents, project archivists are no closer than their urban counterparts in devising new methods of preservation and documentation of these media.

Perhaps none of the project planners expected any "silver bullets," and in that sense at least, no one was disappointed. There are definitely documentation and records management issues that plague regional collection, but those appear to be the same issues urban archivists are struggling with across the country.

Final Thoughts

Initial findings, though not revolutionary, have been exciting. Many of the problems faced in the Red River Valley are directly applicable to other rural regions throughout the United States. Upon completion, it is expected that this project will serve as a model, and that our successes and missteps will serve as a guide for other SHRABs to follow. In our own region, the repercussions will be felt well after this project's completion. The results will help identify future projects and areas of need, as well as positively reinforce the rewards of interstate cooperation.

The opportunities for future work are exciting, but future possibilities will continue to be prefaced by the limitations of space, time, money, and professional barriers faced today. Through group discussions during the project with regional archives and collecting institutions, the North Dakota HRAB is currently discussing creating a traveling Archivist position. Headquartered in Bismarck, this archivist could provide direct on-site inspection and technical assistance to the state's county and local historical societies. More work could be done to foster working relationships between state, regional, and local archives. Increased meetings, workshops, and cooperation could encourage more informed collecting, greater collection access, training opportunities, and future joint efforts like the current project. With the success of the oral interviews and interest group meetings, a larger scale oral history project in the Valley would be very

beneficial. We've learned that while themes are important, the real stories lie with individuals not always adequately represented in traditional collections.

The project enjoyed many successes. Through research and group dialogue many specific changes occurring in Red River Valley communities were identified. For perhaps the first time, rural residents were asked how they themselves wanted to be portrayed and documented by archivists. Residents spoke frankly, generously donated hours of their time, and opened their homes and lives to total strangers. The project organizers have spent significant time with each of the nearly twenty collecting institutions on the American side of the Valley. State, university, and local archives have begun a more open dialogue to discuss documentation strategies and collecting difficulties. And the two SHRAB boards have formed an alliance that will run much deeper than this project's tenure. The project's final event was held at North Dakota State University in Fargo on November 15, 2001. A public forum on the topic "Does Rural Life Still Exist Today," the event drew a capacity audience and extended discussion. Moderator Tom Isern of NDSU led panelists David Danbom, an historian of American agriculture and social change, Dean Carlson, a farmer and author from Kennedy, Minnesota, and Linda Narum of North Dakota State Extension Programs on a vigorous discussion of the realities of rural life in the 21st century. The event was a fitting public conclusion to this ambitious project.

Benjamin Leonard

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE: A SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Heritage of Growth, American Crystal Sugar, 1998.

A history of the company, it deals almost exclusively with sugarbeet production in the Red River Valley. It also discusses corporate dealings in Minneapolis and their effect on valley residents, employee recruitment in Texas, and the company's role in a global marketplace.

Getting Online: A Guide to the Internet for Small Town Leaders. National Center for Small Communities, 1999.

Exactly as the title suggests, booklet outlines basic terms and instructions for operating the internet. Discusses chat groups, email, listservs, downloading, news groups, and video conferencing. It also provides information on setting up web pages. A good overview of web use, it's aimed at small community residents, their town leaders, and school children.

History of the Red River Valley, Past and Present, Including an Account of the Counties, Cities, Towns and Villages of the Valley, Volumes I and II. Grand Forks, North Dakota: Herald Printing Company. Chicago: Cooper and Company, 1909.

Contains city, county, state, and national history combined with extensive biographies of prominent residents willing to pay for their inclusion. The text pays considerable attention to the documentation of local government, commercial, and religious entities.

Our Towns: North Dakota Communities – Our Story. Bismark, ND: Sweetgrass Communications, 1992.

A pictorial documentary of North Dakota small towns. Organized alphabetically, each town is represented by a short historical sketch. In addition to individual town narratives, presents a historical background, as well as modern commentary on economic and civic development, rural issues, and the future.

T12.2 Cultural Landscapes. Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, no date.

Defines cultural landscapes as the interaction of humans and the environment, creating a patch-work of natural and man made features. The degree to which humans can alter the land depends upon their level of technology and cultural values. The museum sets forth five characteristics of cultural habitats: they are environmentally unstable, existing between stages of environmental progression; the existing specialized conditions eliminate most diversity, but allow some species to flourish in unnatural environments; habitat may be primarily occupied by introduced species; the site may have high or low environmental productivity; the site may be degraded or continue to degrade due to the extraction of elements essential to environmental production.

The Growth of Regional Economic Centers in Greater Minnesota. McKnight Foundation, 1996.

Out-state Minnesota is generally healthy, but decreasing population and changing job opportunities are present. Communities relate in clusters, like cells. Smaller ones revolve around larger ones, but each performs different tasks. Repetition of these tasks in rival communities leads to death, according to McKnight. This is identical to what Carl Kraenzel said 50 years previous. To survive, communities will have to reevaluate goals, while always understanding their geographic position.

***Studying Communities in Transition: A Model for Case Study Research and Analysis.* Omaha, NE: Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 1991.**

In the context of Superior, Nebraska as a real world example, the Center documents the new physical realities and emotional responses to those changes. Highlights four specific themes: new economic realities, economic development themes, clues to rural community survival, and vulnerability.

Adelmann, Clarice Olson. *From This Valley*. Staples, MN: Adventure Publications, 1981.

Even though Adelmann misattributes the song, "Red River Valley" to Texas, she recovers by constructing a collection of easily-read short stories depicting her childhood experiences on a valley (MN side) farm.

Amato, Joe and Janet Timmerman, ed. *At The Headwaters: The 1993 Flood in Southwestern Minnesota*. Marshall, MN: Southwest State University, 1995.

A collection of 40 essays and photographs discuss the 1993 flood and its implications for rural Minnesota farmers and residents around Marshall. The flood, resulting from record rainfall, snowmelt, and the culmination of human factors, had devastating effects on the region and the whole Mississippi River watershed.

Amato, Joseph. *The Great Jerusalem Artichoke Circus: The Buying and Selling of the Rural American Dream*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Chronicles southern Minnesota farmers' willingness to accept alternative crops during the 1980s farm crisis, illustrating national trends.

Amato, Joe and John Meyer. *The Decline of Rural Minnesota*. Marshall, MN: Crossings Press, 1993.

Seminal work discussing demographic and economic trends in western Minnesota within a historical context.

Amato, Joseph. *To Call it Home: The New Immigrants of Southwestern Minnesota*. Marshall, MN: Crossings Press, 1996.

Drawn by industrial agricultural labor such as meat processing plants, there has been a dramatic influx of new immigrants to the region since 1990. Trends did not begin there however, and Amato also traces immigration patterns since the 1970s. Southeast Asians, East Africans, Central Mexicans, and those from the Rio Grande border culture have been flowing into the area over the last 30 years. Amato looks at their acceptance, settling tendencies, problems, and benefits associated with their arrival. A valuable first step in documenting an increasingly diverse area.

Amerson, Robert. *From the Hidewood: Memoirs of a Dakota Neighborhood*. St. Paul: Minnesota \ Historical Society Press, 1996.

Amerson's memoir that reads like a novel chronicles his family and neighbors, during his eastern South Dakota childhood. Not a typical memoir, Amerson combines history, family history, and imagination with literary writing to produce a personal and insightful account of community, which transcends its 1930s and 1940s focus.

Anderson, Tony. *Small Town Minnesota A-Z*. Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press, 2000.

A pictorial and narrative documentary of 25 Minnesota small towns. Includes historical information, personal stories, and Anderson's own pontifications.

Beale, Calvin. "Rural Depopulation in the United States: Some Demographic Consequences of Agricultural Adjustments." *Demography*, Volume 1, Issue 1 (1964), 262-272.

Follows rural depopulation, largely tying it to the decrease in need for agricultural labor.

Berry, Wendell. *The Unsettling of America*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977.

Often quoted and cited, this text remains one of the cornerstones of rural study. Berry believes that America is prone to over specialization which divorces itself from a sense of community wholeness. Generally dissatisfied with contemporary conditions, Berry thinks Americans have become highly organized, but less orderly. A good text, though it falls victim to an oversimplification and idealism of the past, while simultaneously relating an oversensitive interpretation of the present. Berry could not separate rural and agriculture. Written in 1977, it remains difficult to completely detach agriculture from rural life today, but it is no longer impossible as Berry suggested.

Berry, Wendell. "The Death of the Rural Community." *The Ecologist* (May-June, 1999), 183-185.

According to Berry, the industrial economy undermines rural community, with globalization acting as a catalyst. Farmers have become statistically insignificant in America. The world economy has taken the human component out of agriculture, making it simply an industrial enterprise, lording over rural America as if it were an imperialistic colony for a few multinational corporations.

Baker, O.E., Ralph Borsodi, and M.L. Wilson. *Agriculture in Modern Life*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1939.

Although fairly romanticized, the text addresses the beginnings of many current rural problems such as out-migration, farm consolidation, and the urban concentration of wealth. Also deals with other changes such as technological modernization, declining birth rates, and changing social patterns. The text is full of good national demographic census data.

Biggs, Huntley and Ronald Tinnermeir, ed. *Small Agricultural Development Problems*. Fort Collins: Colorado State University Press, 1974.

Discusses rural problems such as outmigration, unemployment and underemployment, and industrialization on a world scale.

Birdsell, Sandra. *Agassiz: A Novel in Stories*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1991.

Twenty-three separate episodes depict the lives of Maurice and Mika Lafreniere and their family, as they survive in contemporary rural Manitoba along the Red River.

Bond, J. Wesley. *Minnesota and Its Resources*. New York: Redfield, 1853.

The appendix, *Sketches By a Campfire*, describes Bond's trip along the Red River Trail from St. Paul to Selkirk, Manitoba.

Borchert, John. *America's Northern Heartland*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Full of all kinds of statistics dealing with western Minnesota, North Dakota, and the rest of the northern great plains. Statistics like the lowest rating for college student's perception of livability, and some pretty embarrassing demographic downturn data are representative. Data reaffirms Minneapolis as the regional center for the five state region (Minnesota, the Dakotas, Iowa, and Montana).

Bowler, I.R., C.R. Bryant and M.D. Nellis, ed. *Contemporary Rural Systems in Transition: Vol. 2, Economy and Society*. London: C.A.B., 1992.

Looks demographic trends in rural Canada, U.S., and U.K, 1803-1990.

Bradshaw, Ted and Edward Blakely, ed. *Rural Communities in Advanced Industrial Society*. New York: Praeger, 1979.

Focuses on the rapid and diverse changes effecting rural California. Biased and sympathetic towards rural problems, it tackles issues of economic development.

Brekken, Robert A., editor. *Journey Back to Hawley*. Hawley, MN: Hawley Herald, 1972.

The centennial history of Hawley concentrates on the period before WWII. Brekken stressed agriculture, commerce, and politics, similar to other centennial books.

Brown, David L. and John M. Wardwell. *New Directions in Urban Rural Migration: The Population Turnaround in Rural America*. New York: Academic Press, 1980.

The authors claim that the changing nature of rural employment, societal preferences, transportation, and over-development of urban areas have helped cause a reversal of previous demographic outmigration from rural areas. According to Brown and Wardwell, some rural regions are seeing marked population increases.

Brown, Linda and Kay Mussell, ed. *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989.

Studies traditional eating patterns, and their subsequent the acculturation, hybridization and adoption.

Brown, William, Jerry Skees, Louis Swanson, Paul Thompson, and Laurian Unnevehr. *Sacred Cows and Hot Potatoes: Agrarian Myths in Agricultural Policy*. Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 1992.

The idealized and romanticized image of the family farm is a complete misrepresentation of reality according to the authors. These naive views have fueled farm policy, and because of this, it has largely failed. The book outlines the realistic differences between agriculture and rural life, the false belief in an "average farm," debunk the myth of the family farm, and explain the true economics of farming.

Brunner, Edmund and E. Hsin Pao Yang. *Rural America and the Extension Service*. New York: Columbia Univeristy Press, 1949.

A history and contemporary critique of the agricultural Extension Service in America. Discusses organization's roots, policies, programs, and personnel.

Bull, C. Neil, editor. *Aging in Rural America*. Newberry park, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 1993.

The book covers the major aspects of rural aging, and is organized in four main parts: characteristics, resource development, physical and mental health, and social supports. Each part contains several essays authored by various professionals. Full of demographic data, the text states that three-fifths of Minnesota's elderly population is rural. They tend to be less educated and poorer than their urban counterparts. Most live alone, yet are not socially isolated, living similar social lives to younger residents. Rural areas are faced with declining overall populations and rising numbers of elderly. The elderly put little income into communities, but require high amounts of local resources. Despite this, rural communities try to provide core services as well as informal support networks.

Butala, Sharon. *The Fourth Archangel*. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

This novel follows the small town of Ordeal, on the prairies of Saskatchewan, and their fight to save a dying community. Ultimately unsuccessful, the main characters discover the deeply personal ways their plains life has affected them, and contemplate the constantly changing landscape they have been a part of.

Carlson, Dean. *A Farmer's View*. Kennedy, MN, 1998.

A collection of Carlson's syndicated column covering his personal experiences and insights into farming and living in the northern Red River Valley.

Carlson, Dean. *So This Is Farming*. Cambridge, MN: Adventure Publishing, 1988.

Considers himself a typical sugarbeet and wheat farmer in the northern Red River Valley, Kittson County, MN. Carlson kept a journal for the year of 1986, and this is the result. This text is a smartly written, personal, blow-by-blow account of modern farming. It reveals the trials, tribulations, and constant decision making required in agriculture.

Carnes, Sam. *Urbanization and the Northern Great Plains*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, no date.

Discusses the effects of urbanization and industrialization on the northern great plains. Believing that this will lead to specialization of interests, associations, and relationships, Carnes sees these changes causing everything from fragmentation of local social order to creating a wider range of options for residents. Generally falls in line with Kraenzel, and quotes him often.

Chapman, Kim Alan, Adelaid Fischer, Mary Kinsella Ziegenhagen, and Paul Gruchow. *Valley of Grass: Tallgrass Prairie and parkland of the Red River Valley Region*. St. Cloud, MN: The Northstar Press and Nature Conservancy, 1998.

A mix of history, environmental history, and ecology, *Valley of Grass* discusses the past uses and current restoration of tallgrass prairie in the Red River Valley.

Clausen, Dennis M. *Prairie Son*. Minneapolis: Midlist Press, 1999.

Clausen reconstructed his father's life growing up in Stevens County, Minnesota during the Depression using oral interviews, historical documents, and his fathers own written memoirs.

Cochrane, Willard and Mary Ryan. *American Farm Policy, 1948-1973*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976.

A very thorough, heavy economic history of farm policy and its effects on the agricultural economy.

Critchfield, Richard. *Trees, Why do You Wait?: America's Changing Rural Culture*. Washington: Island Press, 1991.

Culleton, Beatrice. *April Raintree*. Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, Inc., 1984.

Culleton's novel follows the life of April Raintree, and her sister Cheryl. Metis women removed from their family, they search for their own identities as young women in Winnipeg.

Danbom, David. *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

The best general history of rural America and its agriculture that exists. Illustrates the industrialization, capitalization, and globalization of American agriculture, and the materialization of rural culture.

Danbom, David. *Our Purpose is to Serve: The First Century of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station*. Fargo: North Dakota Institute For Regional Studies, 1990.

Part of the National network of experiment stations established by congress in the late nineteenth century, The NDAES was the most powerful and influential scientific organization that focused solely on North Dakota agriculture. Chronicling its history unveils the driving force behind the state's agricultural growth and industrialization.

Danbom, David. *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979.

In 1900, America was both largely rural and agricultural. Though they participated in markets, they were not entirely a monoculture, and also produced a variety of foods used at home. Farmers enjoyed very little real cash, and they remained fairly isolated, with government interfering little in their daily lives. By the 1930s, agriculture had undergone industrialization, consolidation, and professionalization. All of this occurred at some expense of family, individual, and community relationships.

Dasgupta, Satadal, ed. *The Community in Canada: Rural and Urban*. New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996.

Discusses community types, sociology, and transformation, while applying those standards to uniquely Canadian communities. Paraphrasing the editor, this work is both a survey of major theoretical and methodological issues in the field, and specific empirical studies of communities.

Daul, Jennifer, Richard Rathke, and Gary Goreham. *Racial Minority Groups in North Dakota, 1970-1980: A Statistical Portrait*. North Dakota Data Center Publications, Report Series no. 6 (July 1986).

Graphs, tables, and narrative discussing economic and gender factors among ND minorities.

Davidson, Osha Gray. *Broken Heartland*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996.

Discusses government policy and rural ghettoization taking place in Iowa.

DeBruyckere, Donata. *You Can Never Say We Didn't Try*. Marshall, MN: Southwest State University, 1990.

A history of the National Farm Organization and its members in Lyon County, Minnesota.

Dillman, Don and John Allen. *Against All Odds: Rural Community in the Information Age*. San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994.

The text's central preface is that rural communities can retain a strong sense of community in the 21st century. Strong community organization fosters perpetual spirit and high levels of activism. Because of technology and better transportation, individuals are no longer tied

to one community. They may live in one, work in another, and entertain themselves in another. Study focuses on Bremer, WA, a small wheat growing community in the eastern hills. Through strong leadership, business cooperation, community activism Bremer has flourished. According to the authors, contemporary rural America lives in three eras: community control, mass production, and the information age. Through their research, Dillman and Allen stress non-documented conversations in coffee shops and gathering places as critical to small community decision making. *Against All Odds* remains one of the best texts cited in this work.

Douglass, Gordon K., editor. *Cultivating Agricultural Literacy: A Challenge For the Liberal Arts*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, January 1985.

Funded by grants from the foundation, eleven small colleges participated in a program to increase agricultural coursework and awareness into their liberal arts curriculums. Several Iowa schools, and others in Michigan, California, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Ohio participated. The goal was not to promote careers in agriculture. The Kellogg Foundation and the colleges felt that students no longer had a grasp of agricultural issues. This interdisciplinary approach sought to enlighten students on various aspects of farming and farm life. This report details each college's approach and results.

Drache, Hiram. *Legacy of the Land: Agriculture's Story to the Present*. Danville, IL: The Interstate Printers and Publishers Inc., 1996.

Provides an overall history of American agriculture complete with timelines. It's a good review of secondary literature.

Drache, Hiram. *Plowshares to Printouts: Farm Management As Viewed Through 75 Years of the Northwest Farm Managers Association*. Danville, IL: The Interstate Printers and Publishers Inc., 1985.

Headquartered in Fargo, ND, the Manager's Association predates the National Better Farming Association and the Extension Service. It strove to educate and professionalize farmers in a pivotal and changing time in U.S. agricultural history. Drache documents evolving methods, technology, and external forces which shaped the farm economy.

Drache, Hiram. *The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North*. Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1964.

Capitalizing on cheap lands from the bankrupt Northern Pacific Railway, huge wheat farms sprang up in the Red River Valley utilizing transient labor and machinery. Giving credit to James B Power for being the creator of Bonanza farming (though he resided outside the valley), Drache explores developments which led to the creation of the large farms, details the Northern Pacific land grant, and discusses large farming processes and techniques.

Drache, Hiram. *Beyond the Furrow: Some Keys to Successful Farming in the 20th Century*. Danville, IL: Interstate Publishers Inc., 1976.

Using extensive interviews, Drache attempts to guess what the future of farming in North Dakota will bring. Also included is a good discussion of 1970s North Dakota farming practices.

Duncan, Marvin R. and Kerry Webb. *Energy and American Agriculture*. Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, 1980.

Agriculture is becoming more energy-dependent at a rapid rate. With increasing costs and shortages associated with energy use, the booklet examines agricultural energy conservation and alternative energy sources. High initial investment costs, limited economic feasibility, and less efficiency limit the use of alternative sources.

Duncan, Otis and Albert Reiss Jr. *Social Characteristics of Urban and Rural Communities, 1950.* New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc., 1956.

This monograph takes advantage of new census procedures which took effect after 1920. It probably represents one of the first studies to analyze and compare rural and urban statistics in the same volume. The “rurban” community they discovered illustrated completely new problems and issues in small town society. Discovering this, they were forced to reevaluate the previous definition of community.

Duncan, Russell. *I Remember.* Published by author, 1978.

Written especially for his grandchildren, Duncan remarks what tremendous changes have taken place in North Dakota from the territorial period to the late 1970s. Born in Calvin, ND to a fairly affluent farm family, Duncan reminisces about his early experiences.

Edwards, Everett E. *A Bibliography of the History of Agriculture in the U.S.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1930.

An extensive exhaustive bibliography containing over 4,200 references, many of them obscure.

Eidem, Goody, ed. *Readings in the Geography of North Dakota.* Bismark: North Dakota Studies, 1968.

A collection of state geography articles from government, media, scholars, and business publications.

Ekstrom, Brenda and Larry Leistritz. *Rural Community Decline and Revitalization: An Annotated Bibliography.* New York: Garland Press, 1988.

Produced in conjunction with Iowa State and NDSU, this bibliography is organized into two broad economic categories, as the title would suggest: decline and revitalization. It outlines 670 works from national to local in scope.

Erdrich, Louis. *The Beet Queen.* New York: Henry Holt, 1986.

A historical novel about several characters of various economic means orbiting around Argus, ND (possibly the actual town of Argusville, located in the Red River Valley, 20 miles north of Fargo).

Estes, Patricia, David Maack and Denise Pinkney. *The History-Makers, Challenges Met 1950-1990.* Moorhead, MN: Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative, 1990.

History of the Min-Dak Farmers Cooperative, the major controlling interest of sugarbeet production in the Red River Valley.

Faragher, John Mack. “History from the Inside-Out: Writing the History of Women in Rural America.” *American Quarterly*, Volume 33, Issue 5, (Winter, 1981), 537-557.

Faragher urges the academic community to research and write more on rural women, a group he says has been largely ignored. Faragher does include a nice overview of the existing historiography. He outlines types of primary sources such as diaries, memoirs, oral histories, probate, and census records. Using such sources, Faragher crafts a couple of quick biographical sketches of random farm women, illustrating the wealth of information available.

Faribanks, Darol and Bergine Haakenson, editors. *Writings of Farm Women 1840-1940, An Anthology*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1990.

Collected prominent writings of previously published farm women. Focuses on the pioneer period in the Upper Midwest, and is a good overview to many excellent full-length works. Authors include Laura Ingalls Wilder, Buffalo Bird Woman, Era Bell Thompson, and Meridel LeSeuer.

Fink, Deborah. *Cutting Into the Meatpacking Line: Workers and Change in the Rural Midwest*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Fink supplements her anthropological study of Iowa meat packing plants by becoming an IBP employee for five months. In addition to her own experiences and historical research, she conducted extensive interviews of employees and ex-employees. The result is a wonderful and personal study.

Fitchen, Janet. *Endangered Spaces, Enduring Places: Change, Identity, and Survival in Rural America*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991.

A discussion of modern rural woes beginning in the 1980s, focusing on New York State.

Foley, Douglas. *The Heartland Chronicles*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995.

Foley discusses two adjacent yet autonomous communities in his native state of Iowa. In doing so, he describes the rural lives of both Indians and whites, and their often tenuous relations.

Franklin, Michael. *Rich Man's Farming: The Crisis in Agriculture*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

"Nobody is qualified to become a statesman who is entirely ignorant of wheat." – Socrates.

Centered around the 1980s farm crisis, Franklin lists the reasons as: world production exceeding demand, disappearance of traditional markets as other nations industrialize and produce more, growing anti-farm lobby, government readiness to give limited financial aid without engaging real solutions, and American consumers demand for lower food costs. Not as gloomy as the title or first few chapters predict, Franklin continues with an intelligent decision about results, remedies, and future hope.

Friedberger, Mark. *Farm Families and Change in Twentieth-Century America*. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1988.

According to Friedberger, farm failures are crises that hit individual farms, and reflect "the complex interrelationships of banks, corporations, national and international economic transformations, federal and local politics, and community institutions and businesses." Friedberger addresses themes: farming methods, longevity, inheritance, debt, family, and community, to illustrate how family farms have survived through the use of those resources.

Galston, William A. *A Tough Row to Hoe: The 1985 Farm Bill and Beyond*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1985.

Discusses the intricacies and implications of the national farm bill, passed every four years, on the eve of the 1985 bill. By 1985, farm program costs had soared, to 28 billion in 1983, but rural America failed to prosper. In the middle of the worst rural crisis since the great depression (according to the author), Galston makes three predictions by the year 2000: technology will drastically enhance productivity, which will accelerate processes forming a more

concentrated, specialized corporate agriculture sector; farming, the most credit/debt dependent industry, will be drastically affected by macroeconomic policy; and integration of American agriculture into the world economy, the only feasible answer besides cutting production to save farming.

Gilman, Rhoda R. *The Red River Trails*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1979.

Between 1820 and 1870 the Red River Trail represented a well-traveled trade route between Selkirk's settlement in Manitoba and St. Paul. Supplies, piled in ox carts, made their way through an intricate system of trails that crossed Minnesota, North Dakota, and Manitoba. Their existence illustrates the importance of interstate and international trade to the region, and their success spurred railroad development.

Glasmeier, Amy K. and Marie Howland. *From Combines to Computers*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Goldstein, Bernice, and Robert Eichhorn. "The Changing Protestant Ethic: Rural patterns in Health, Work, and Leisure." *American Sociological Review*, Volume 26, Issue 4 (August, 1961), 557-565.

Contrasts the protestant ethic, one of hard work and disinterest with material wealth with the lives of modern farmers. Lumps farmers into categories according to their answers to a few subjective questions. Attempts to draw conclusions about their financial situations, spending habits, and work ethics. Doesn't take into account the rising costs of participating in agriculture, the need for increased mechanization, or the affect of farm size on leisure time. The article raises some interesting questions, but fails to thoroughly prove its thesis.

Goreham, Gary, ed. *Encyclopedia of Rural America: The Land and People, 2 volumes*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1997.

Featuring over 238 entries from adolescents, to home-based work, to tillage, this encyclopedia is an invaluable reference tool.

Green, Sheldon and James Coomber. *Unwanted Bread, the Challenge of Farming and Ranching*. Fargo: Institute for Regional Studies, 2000.

This is the best collection of interview conducted with agriculturalists I have ever seen. Combined with excellent photography, *Unwanted Bread* is powerful, compelling, and aesthetically pleasing. Personal stories from North Dakota farmers, ranchers, agribusiness executives, scientists, retirees, and value-added entrepreneurs cover the wide spectrum of contemporary American agriculture. This book closely mimics some of our own project goals and its existence serves as both an affirmation and a benchmark.

Groh, Trauger and Steven McFadden. *Farms of Tomorrow: Community Supported Farms, Farm Supported Communities*. Kimberton, PA: Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Assoc., 1990.

Authors advocate natural, organic farming through increased diversity and environmental stewardship. Discusses a communal system with no private land ownership. This organizational publication revolts against corporate farming and full market participation.

Gross, Neil. "Review of Current Research on the Sociology of Rural Life." *American Sociological Review*, Volume 17, Issue 1 (February, 1952), 83-90.

Review of current research through the census for current work and an academic questionnaire. Gross found many contemporary studies were undertaken under pressure from

agricultural leaders to shed light on problems associated with farming. Gross provided overviews of different methodologies and approaches used in research.

Gruchow, Paul. *Grass Roots: The Universe of Home*. Minneapolis: Milk Weed Press, 1995.

One of the best books I have ever read. Gruchow castigates modern life and its dissociation from the natural landscape and rural lifestyle. He discusses all things rural: a sense of community, ties to the land, problems, triumphs, and people. In doing so, Gruchow reflects upon his own past, growing up on a subsistence farm in southern Minnesota.

Gruchow, Paul. *Journal of a Prairie Year*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

Gruchow follows each season on the prairie writing both ecological and cultural introspections on each one.

Handy-Marchello, Barbara. "Extension Work Among Black Sea Germans in Logan, McIntosh, and Emmons Counties, 1933-1940." MA thesis, North Dakota State University, 1988.

Extension agents met resistance in culturally closed German-Russian communities. Economic hardship and drought forced limited reception during the 1930s. Thesis discusses both the history of these communities, beginning in 1884, and the history of the North Dakota Extension Service.

Handy-Marchello, Barbara. "Carrying Half: Gender and Settlement in Rural North Dakota 1875-1930." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1996.

Discusses the roles of women in farm production, community, and family, in rural North Dakota. Women's work, devalued by society, disappeared from the historical record during the period. Handy-Marchello looks at both recent immigrants and Yankees, comparing and contrasting the two.

Hargreaves, Mary W. M. *Dry Farming the Northern Great Plains 1920-1990*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993.

The book was a result of changing interpretive perceptions over the last 50 years. According to Hargreaves, agricultural change in the region has been both driven and governed by weather, specifically rainfall. Within this context, demographics, economics, technology, and politics all played a role in the changing face of agriculture. Hargreaves documents those changes.

Hasselstrom, Linda. *Feels Like Far: A Rancher's Life on the Great Plains*. New York: The Lyons Press, 1999.

Hasselstrom writes in a highly personal, revealing and introspective style about family life and a spiritual connection to her western South Dakota ranch, where she lived for over 40 years.

Hassler, Jon. *Staggerford*. New York: Ballentine Books, 1974.

The story follows one week in the life of Miles Pruitt, a 35 year-old bachelor who teaches high school in Minnesota. Set in a small town, it illustrates community interaction and their geographical relationships.

Hatch, Elvin. *Biography of a Small Town*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.

Based on Starkey, CA (a pseudonym), located in the central coast region between San Francisco and Los Angeles. This anthropological study finds a growing loss of rural autonomy (real or imagined?), changing community dynamic, and agricultural corporatization. Another in the long line of authors who feel rural America is experiencing a “gradual death” (271), brought on by the influx of urban economic ideals.

Hathaway, Dale, J. Allen Beegle, and W. Keith Bryant. *People of Rural America*. U.S Department of Commerce, 1968.

Published thirteen years after Kraenzel’s *The Great Plains in Transition*, *People of Rural America* seems to agree with his thesis. The first government statement of its kind I have found, the text defines rural areas as, “a relatively small, more or less functionally specialized and interdependent sector of a dominantly urbanized and industrialized society.” The book’s first chapter offers a frank and serious discussion concerning the changing role of rural communities. Following chapters contain less exciting material and multitudes of statistical data.

Healy, W.J. *Women of Red River*. Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers, 1923.

The book is a consolidated version of personal accounts. The Women’s Canadian Club, Winnipeg interviewed local women, compiling a history of their experiences from 1873 through to the 1920s.

Higbee, Edward. *Farms and Farmers in an Urban Age*. New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1963.

Higbee claims that agrarian myths are no longer applicable to modern agricultural production. Farmers are producing and marketing on a large world scale. As technology made labor less important, it made capital infinitely more important. That dichotomy, along with the often adversarial role between city and country, are the central themes of the book.

Hildebrand, John. *Mapping the Farm: The Chronicle of a Family*. New York: Knopf, 1995.

Hildebrand writes a biography of his wife’s family, and their farm that has been in the family over 100 years, and is located near Rochester, Minnesota.

Hitch, Earle. *Rebuilding Rural America: New Designs for Community Life*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950.

Analyzing rural problems and issues, the authors lend approaches to solutions and discusses community outlook. Through this they feel, only through smart development can we keep substantial populace in rural America.

Hobbs, Daryl and Don Dillman, ed. *Rural Society in the U.S.: Issues for the 1980s*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982.

Standing at the perspective of 1982, this work is a call to rural sociologists, discussing the types of social research that needed to be done in the coming decade.

Hoffbeck, Steven R. *The Haymakers*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000.

Hoffbeck chronicles five Minnesota farm families including his own. Covering more than a one-hundred year period, *The Haymakers*, is an excellent historical and personal look at agricultural practices, farm life, and interpersonal relations. Hoffbeck weaves great primary

source material and his own reflections into a seamless account. This is truly one of the best books on rural Minnesota.

Hoiberg, Otto. *Exploring the Small Community*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1955.

Though published almost 50 years ago, Hoiberg's insightful look at small towns is still important today. As well as a descriptive aid, *Exploring...* also provides guides to community planning and leadership development. Hoiberg's description of small towns as a "social watershed," should become part of this project's lexicon.

Holland, Barbara. *Bingo Night at the Fire Hall: Rediscovering Life in an American Village*. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1997.

Dedicated to "the last villagers," Holland accounts for her residence in a small rural Virginia community that becomes closer to the Washington D.C. metropolis every day. A bit romanticized and self-serving at times, it is still an eloquent essay of modern rural life. Her highly developed sense of place applies to people in small communities all over the country, not just those living near her inherited mountain cabin.

Horton, Donald C. *Patterns of Farm Financial Structure; A Cross-Section View of Economic and Physical Determinants*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Surveys financial characteristics of various size farms located throughout the country in 41 states.

Hoy, Jim and Tom Isern. *Plains Folk: A Commonplace of the Great Plains*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.

A grassroots social narrative of plains culture and history. A collection of folk tales, agricultural labor, social life, and technology, from wild cow milking to baseball.

Hoy and Isern. *Plains Folk II: The Romance of the Landscape*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Similar in style to the first book, II contains legends, jokes, and stories of plains peoples' ties to the land.

Hutchinson, Joseph. *Farming and Food Supply: The Interdependence of Countryside and Town*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Provides a short history of world agriculture over the last four thousand years. Discusses climate, soil, animal and plant domestication, and agricultural systems employed in many countries. This is a good, concise history of agriculture on the world scale.

Isern, Tom. *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs: Harvesting and Threshing on the North American Plains*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1990.

The history of wheat production on the northern plains. A thorough discussion of agricultural machinery, and the molding of technology with manual labor. The great plains environment shaped technology produced elsewhere, and it had to be adapted for use there. Plains farmers facilitated these adaptations, and adopted only technology which was applicable to them. Though farmers shaped incoming technology, it eventually evaporated the previous culture built around the manual threshing and harvesting of wheat.

Isern, Tom. *The Cultures of Agriculture on the Northern Plains*. Marshall, MN: Society for the Study of Local and Regional History, Southwest State University, 1999.

Isern remarks, "We have fulfilled Carl Kraenzel's predictions." Rural society as we once knew it is dead. However, small town life continues to thrive. Isern sees the plains as a region of successive frontiers, driven by the exploitation of a product for profit. He traces the history of those frontiers combining research, historiography, personal experiences, and popular culture; while in the meantime comparing the American west to similar areas in New Zealand and Australia. Current population trends have left much of the northern plains almost devoid of settlement. This is not a disappointing thing for Isern, but instead signifies the possibility and opportunity for a new frontier.

Isern, Tom. *Dakota Circle: Excursions on the True Plains*. Fargo: Institute For Regional Studies, 2000.

A collection of stories: personal essays, excursions, and interviews; all depicting modern rural life. A sometimes lighthearted look at culture and community in North Dakota.

Jackson, James A. *The Centennial History of Manitoba*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970.

Written under the auspices of the Manitoba Historical Society, this history covers the entire period through the late 1960s, but concentrates on the period preceding WWII.

Jellison, Katherine. *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Chronicles women's farm and domestic labor during an era of great social change and technological advancement. Jellison looks at women's roles, and how technology affected them. While some advancements like power washers made a few domestic tasks easier, technology also created the opportunity for more work. Increased farm mechanization required less agricultural labor and threatened to lessen women's roles in agricultural production. Women resisted however, and according to Jellison, their experiences during the period help spawn the modern feminist movement.

Jensen, Joan M. *With These Hands: Women Working the Land*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1981.

Jensen acknowledges the difficulty in finding historical documentation on farm women. Relying heavily on diaries, letters, and interview, Jensen reconstructs the experiences of farm women. Both historical and documentary, the work combines history with photographs and contemporary stories, paying special attention to the lives of Hispanic and Native American farm women.

Johnson, Lenora and Dorothy Olson. *In the Heart of the Red River Valley: A History of the People of Norman County, Minnesota*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1976.

Johnson has published several works on Ada. Written for a wide audience by an amateur historian, the books contain scattered and often trivial facts about Ada's development. Much of the information overlaps and repeats. However, these texts are among the best published works on the locality. I have found no inconsistencies, and feel confident trusting her historic facts.

Jones, David C. and Ian MacPherson, ed. *Building Beyond the Homestead*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1988.

A collection of essays concerning western Canadian settlement, including the Manitoba portion of the Red River Valley from the 1870s through 1930s. Provides a good overview of Canadian prairie history from a variety of perspectives.

Jones, Lu Ann, and Nancy Grey Osterud. "Breaking New Ground: Oral History and Agricultural History." *The Journal of American History*, Volume 76, Issue 2 (September, 1989), 551-564.

Jones and Osterud focus on the last fifty years of agriculture. They discuss the rich collections already existing in institutional archives, from local museums to state historical societies. Often, they stress, valuable information may be found in collections not directly pertaining to agriculture. They also list the merits of oral history, and its ability to partially compensate for a lack of traditional documents, especially concerning women and minorities.

Keillor, Stephen J. *Cooperative Commonwealth: Co-ops in Rural Minnesota, 1859-1939*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000.

An exhaustive study of the cooperative movement in Minnesota and their social, ethnic, political, and economic roles they played in rural communities. Discusses the types of cooperatives, sponsoring agencies, and chronology.

Kelsey, Vera. *Red River Runs North!* New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1951.

A social and geologic history of the river and its valley.

Kenney, Lynda. *The Past is Never Far Away: A History of the Red River Valley Potato Industry*. East Grand Forks, MN: Red River Valley Potato Growers Association, 1995.

A popular history using photographs, personal narratives, and anecdotes to tell the story of potatoes in the valley.

Kinnear, Mary. *A Female Economy: Women's Work in a Prairie Province, 1870-1970*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998.

Kinnear's study area encompassed southern Manitoba, and whose center was the Red River Valley. She studied both paid and unpaid labor, women with family and without. Kinnear paid special attention to class and ethnicity, two factors that enormously affected women's experiences. This is an excellent historical account full of personal stories and solid scholarship.

Kirkpatrick, Ellis Lore. *The Farmer's Standard of Living*. New York: The Century Company, 1929.

A demographic and economic study, Kirkpatrick discusses the differing living standards of farmers throughout the country. Information includes income levels, consumer goods, produced goods, living expenses, and family desires. The book addresses women's experiences and contributions to farm production and consumption. Kirkpatrick found that farm standards of living in terms of material goods, do not measure up to urban residents. However, happy farm families acknowledged this, but did not expect to have all of the urban accoutrements because they savored their lifestyle.

Kittredge, William. *Owning It All*. St. Paul: Graywolf Press, 1987.

Kittredge grew up on a southeastern Oregon cattle ranch, and later moved to a trendy writer's community in Bozeman, Montana. In this narrative, he reflects on both experiences and

discusses the change occurring in both places within his lifetime. He has a very cynical view of western residents, and comes off a bit elitist. However, he does so in contempt for his vanishing way of life, and a west which is environmentally degraded.

Kraenzel, Carl. *The Great Plains in Transition*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

This landmark study grew out of his 1942 report to the Northern Great Plains Agricultural Advisory Council, "The Northern Plains in a World of Change." *The Great Plains in Transition* predicted the subsequent depopulation of the northern plains. Kraenzel's work was so ahead of its time, it remains one of the seminal books today. Kraenzel viewed the northern Great Plains as a distinct and unique region, ultra-sensitive to the fluctuations of outside stimuli. Because of its semi-arid climate, the plains' demographic threshold is significantly less than historic levels, and it was unrealistic to believe those could be sustained. He predicted that depopulation would be so extensive that rural life would continue to thrive only in conjunction with sporadically placed cities. These cities and towns acted like cell nuclei, emitting spheres of influence and becoming hubs of commerce and activity, where the rest of the countryside would be void of such things.

Kramer, Mark. *Three Farms: Making Milk, Meat, and Money From the American Soil*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977.

Chronicles three different farms in the mid 1970s: a modern dairy in Massachusetts, an Iowa family farm producing hogs, corn, and soybeans, and a corporate tomato farm in California's San Joaquin Valley. It's a good look at three very different forms of modern agriculture, but provides little outside interpretation or analysis.

Lauck, Jon. *American Agriculture and the Problem of Monopoly: The Political Economy of Grain Belt Farming, 1953-1980*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

Lavenda, Robert. *Corn Fests and Water Carnivals: Celebrating Community in Minnesota*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

The book grew out of Lavenda's Anthropology coursework at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. Lavenda finds festivals to be important at creating a culture of memory: by celebrating common elements of culture, and creating a date tradition to which memories can adhere to. In addition to community tradition, these events also reflect national trends, such as introducing runs. Lavenda covers about ten festivals extensively, but cites many more.

Leistriz, F. Larry and Rita R. Hamm. *Rural Economic Development, 1975-1993: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Attempts to document the literature of a changing rural system. Includes 750 annotated sources.

Lewis, Sinclair. *Main Street*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1920.

The quintessential novel of small town life set in western Minnesota.

Lysengen, Janet Daley and Ann M. Rathke, ed. *The Centennial Anthology of North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Plains*. Bismark: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1996.

A collection of articles from *North Dakota History* on a variety of topics.

Manfred, Frederick. *The Golden Bowl*. St. Paul: Webb Publishing Company, 1944.

Dust Bowl farmers in western South Dakota struggle with the weather, farm crisis, and an apathetic government.

Marti, Donald B. *Women of the Grange: Mutuality and Sisterhood in Rural America, 1866-1920*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991.

Traces women's involvement in the Grange during a forty-four year period. This rural and agricultural organization had its roots in Minnesota and stressed gender equality, promoting the participation and success of women members.

Matthews, Anne. *Where the Buffalo Roam*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1992.

Written as a companion to the Popper's 'Buffalo Commons' thesis, the book came out of Matthew's travels across the Plains with the Poppers. Her account is overdramatic and over-pessimistic to be sure, but it's an accurate portrayal of the emotion on both sides of the theory that the Great Plains would be better served as an uninhabited buffalo sanctuary.

Meyers, Kent. *Light in the Crossing*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Modern short stories comprising the elements and rhythms of small town life: work, relationship to town, industrialization, and teenage entertainment. Ideas of big city ignorance and romanticized small town ideals pervade entire book.

Meyers, Kent. *The Witness of Combines*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Meyers grew up in southwestern Minnesota during the late 1960s through early 1980s. He lived through a fairly successful small-scale farming operation, the death of his father when Meyers was 17, and the subsequent sale of the farm. Meyers' full range of experiences produces a highly personal story reflecting on community and environmental ties to home. Story is indicative of larger agricultural and demographic trends.

Miner, Craig. *Harvesting the High Plains: John Kriss and the Business of Wheat Farming, 1920-1950*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998.

John Kriss and his family farmed over sixteen thousand acres in several counties and two states at their peak. Headquartered in Colby, Kansas, the family was one of the most prominent wheat producers in the nation. Miner sifted through a wealth of Kriss family papers and farm records to reproduce their story. This is not only an illustration of one family's participation and rise to prominence during an era of rapid industrialization and modernization, but an example of fine scholarship and the importance of preserving farm records for future study.

Moore, Ernest G. *The Agricultural Research Service*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967.

Thorough history of the Agricultural Research Service and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Morton, W.L. *Manitoba: A History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.

Morton completed a thorough history of the province from the seventeenth century through the 1950s. Post WWII saw a boom in provincial agriculture that fueled rapid industrialization. Rural electrification and improving transportation infrastructure led to the assimilation of farm families into a more urban economy. Winnipeg had become a fully modern, industrial, high-tech metropolis by 1960. Highways were further improved. However, Morton raised concerns in the epilogue for rural Manitoba. By 1955 those areas were exhibiting similar changes as communities in Minnesota and North Dakota. Out-migration, increased elderly populations, and school consolidations had begun to occur. While Manitoba was still prospering

as the book left off, warning signs were beginning to appear.

Mosher, Howard Frank. *North Country: A Personal Journey Through the Borderland*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

Mosher traveled west across the entire length of the U.S.-Canadian border. Though his time in the Red River Valley was short, he reflects on its history, and topography, while he joined in community life. His coast-to-coast journey puts the Red River Valley in a national context rather than a regional phenomenon.

Murphy, Timothy. *Set the Ploughshare Deep, A Prairie Memoir*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Once Scholar of the House of Poetry at Yale University, Murphy now farms and writes in the Red River Valley. This memoir incorporates poetry and prose deeply tied to Murphy's sense of place. Woodcuts by regional artist Charles Beck add another dimension of illustration.

Murray, Stanley Norman. *The Valley Comes of Age: A History of Agriculture in the Valley of the Red River of the North, 1812-1920*. Fargo: Institute For Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, 1961.

An early history of the Red River Valley.

Nelson, Daniel. *Farm and Factory: Workers in the Midwest 1880-1990*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Studies and contrasts the parallel growth of industry and agriculture during the late twentieth century in the Midwest.

Neth, Mary. *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest 1900-1940*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

There were no separate labor spheres on the farm, and separation occurred only due to physical demands. The cyclical nature of farm work, with very busy periods, lent itself to the family labor system. This system permeates the rest of rural society, leading to close community and neighborhood ties. These ties are reaffirmed through shared communal, traditional, and festive events. Today, much family labor exists off the farm, and industrialization has lessened the importance of neighborhood work relationships, however family bonds remain crucial. Farm agriculture depended, and still depends on family labor, and this contributed to the rural social system. However, professionalization and industrialization brought greater genderfication and separation of wealth.

Norris, Kathleen. *Dakota: A Spritiual Geography*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

Norris writes an emotional, intellectual essay about her life in the North Dakota/South Dakota border country. Introducing the term, "spiritual geography," the book displays her ultra-developed sense of place. This book has become the benchmark for subsequent memoirs and essays no matter their geographic location.

Olson, Brent. *The Lay of the Land, A View From the Priairie*. Lincoln, NE: J&L Lee Company, 1998.

Olson, a farmer from western Minnesota, is a syndicated columnist writing personal observations on rural and agricultural life. Similar in career and style to Dean Carlson, Olson's work reflects a very observant and personal attachment to his surroundings. This work is a collection of short stories and introspections. Both Olson and Carlson are a must read for anyone interested in the opinions and insights of "real people" living and working in rural areas.

Opie, John. *The Law of the Land: Two Hundred Years of American Farmland Policy*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Opie argues that the long-held American ideal of the yeoman farmer is historically unfounded. American land policy, since its inception in 1785, has favored speculative private industry. The government's division of public lands into private hands squandered a great resource. The pull of private ownership created by these policies has plagued a land-frenzied public for the last 200 years. This highly readable history provides a good and complete synopsis of governmental agricultural policy.

Ostler, Jeffrey. *Prairie Populism: The Fate of Agrarian Radicalism in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa, 1880-1892*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993.

Ostler chronicles a particularly tumultuous time period for American agrarians. Subsequent political movements reflected farmers' concerns and insecurities involving politics, markets, and their livelihood. This work provides a good basis for understanding the historical period, and allows for parallels to be drawn to current rural problems.

Ottoson, Howard W., Eleanor M. Birch, Philip A. Henderson, and A.H. Anderson. *Land and People in the Northern Great Plains Transition Area*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

Divided into 2 sections, the first half gives a history of settlement and agriculture on the plains stretching from the Red River Valley through Montana and down to eastern New Mexico. The transition area specifically surveyed by the study covers only central Nebraska. The book focuses on changes in agriculture and the effects on rural economies and communities. Adopting many of Kraenzel's ideas from the previous decade, the authors make predictions and suggestions for future development and preservation of these communities.

Poston, Richard Waverly. *Small Town Renaissance*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950.

In 1947, the University of Montana received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to study small town life in Montana. Operating for three years before running out of financial steam, the study organized 14 community groups. It attempted to find answers to growing economic and demographic downturns, and provide a successful model for small town life. Poston's text chronicles this effort.

Powers, Edward A., Willis J. Goudy, and Patricia M. Keith. *Later Life Transitions: Older Males in Rural America*. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff Publishing, 1985.

The text is based on an Iowa State University study conducted between 1964 and 1974. It began by following fully employed rural men between the ages of 50-94 in 1964 for ten years. These males included five samples: farmers, blue-collar workers, small businessmen, salaried professionals, and self-employed professionals. The study measured their work attitudes, health patterns, family networks, social attitudes, and life satisfaction.

Raaen, Aagot. *Grass of the Earth*. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1950.

Immigrant novel illustrates the self-reliance of immigrant farmers, and the hardships they faced in North Dakota.

Ray, Victor. *Crosswinds on the Countryside*. National Farmers Union, 1987.

Political, technological, and environmental history of U.S. agriculture since 1901. This short booklet (35 pages) exhibits the biases of the National Farmers Union in presenting information.

Reich, Robert and Anthony Cohen. *The Work of Nations: The Symbolic Construction of Community*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1991.

Reynolds, Susan Pommering. "Shelterbelts in the Red River Valley of the North: Patterns in the Landscape." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1983.

Reynolds studied shelterbelt distribution in Kittson County, MN; Pembina, ND; and Franklin, Montcalm, and Rhineland Counties, Manitoba. Discusses the history of shelterbelt planting, management, removal, and their effect on the cultural landscape.

Rhodes, Richard. *Farm: A Year in the Life of an American Farmer*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

Rhodes lived with a central Missouri farm family for a year and chronicled their experiences. This is an interesting, sometimes exciting, highly detailed account of modern farm life. The "Bauers," their real names changed to protect their anonymity, are ordinary people on an average farm. Neither wildly prospering nor bankrupt, they continue to farm and comfortably survive. *Farm* is a very good look at their lives, and the lives of farmers everywhere.

Robinson, Elwyn. *A History of North Dakota*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

According to Robinson, there are two keys to understanding North Dakota History: understanding its historical context and geographic location. This is his approach in undertaking the best academic treatment of North Dakota's broad history.

Rogers, Earl and Susan. *The American Farm Crisis: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Press, 1989.

Scope covers 1980s farm crisis and its historical background. Within this, it focuses on the crisis, causes, extent, and solutions. Contains 622 briefly annotated sources.

Rohrer, Wayne C. and Louis H. Douglas. *The Agrarian Transition in America: Dualism and Change*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1969.

Traces the development of agriculture as well as the urban-rural relationship that accompanies it. With increased modernization and mechanization comes an increased interdependence on urban areas and their financial systems. Vertical integration, agribusiness, and value-added agriculture are all attempts to strengthen the link between agriculture and the mainstream economy. "If we view the transition of agriculture wholly as a process of rationalizing production, America at this point in time has a success on its hands. However, this success yielded an aggregate of farmer...who do not and/or cannot practice modern agriculture. The transition in America has had this by-product." (viii)

Rothstein, Morton. *Writing American Agricultural History*. Marshall, MN: Society for the Study of Local and Regional History, Southwest State University, 1996.

Traces agricultural writing from Frederick Jackson Turner to the present. Found that those writing agricultural history come from a wide range of disciplines, and until recently, most writers have been from rural areas themselves. Until recently, most historical work has been favorable, but now much concerns the corporatization of agriculture and the forcing out of smaller operations. While writers consider change in rural areas to be dynamic, complex, and intriguing; they have a tendency to view rural residents as dim and uninteresting. This is a good concise overview of extant material, and historiographical trends.

Sachs, Carolyn. *The Invisible Farmers, Women in Agricultural Production*. Totawa, NJ: Rowman and Allanheld, 1983.

Traces women's involvement in American agriculture from the seventeenth century to the present. The last half of the book consists of interviews the author completed with various modern farm women, and is the most valuable portion of the text.

Schafer, Joseph. *The Social History of American Agriculture*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936.

Written by the acting head of the Wisconsin State Historical Society and dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner, Schafer's thesis reflects those influences. Schafer feels American agriculture is based on two principles: the availability of land, and technological progression. As new land opened up, it would be tilled first by primitive means on a subsistence basis. When infrastructure and civilization appeared, farmers would quickly switch to cash crops. More intensive farming techniques were needed, and technology was invented to fill those needs. Modern agriculture, according to Schafer, is an outgrowth of those principles. To him, large corporate farms (a reality even in his day) are the inevitable result of turnerian evolution, because they are more technologically advanced and efficient.

Schlebecker, John T. *Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Farming, 1607-1972*. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1975.

The history of United States Agriculture broken up into time periods and topics. Sections include "farm machinery technology" and "land laws and policies" among others. The book covers commercial farming, described as anyone selling any amount of farm products for payment. This book is not as good as Danbom's *Born in the Country*, but may be a good second text.

Schwab, James. *Raising Less Corn and More Hell: Midwestern Farmers Speak Out*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

Schwab compiled 38 interviews of contemporary Midwestern farmers and loosely organized them under logical subject headings. Complete with an introduction by Iowa Senator Tom Harkin, the author's choice of interviews depicts the personal failures of the current farm crisis.

Sherman, William C. *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota*. Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1983.

Stated in the introduction, this work attempts three things: provide a comprehensive list of North Dakota's ethnic groups, give their geographic locations, show historical and demographic contexts. Research relied on census data, ethnic organizations, place name indexes, county atlases, and railroad records.

Shover, John. *First Majority, Last Minority*. Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976.

An extensive discussion of modern farm changes such as accelerated out-migration, environmental degradation, rising unemployment, family farm disappearance, etc.

Sims, Leroy Newell, ed. *The Rural Community: Ancient and Modern*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920.

Puts rural culture in historical terms: primitive village, medieval manor, revolutionary America (village community), disintegration of the village community, and the modern community. Sims saw the 1920s modern rural community as increasing in: complexity, minute specialization of activities, higher interdependence, division of wealth, rapid movement from place

to place, prompt idea communication, globalization, and “vicious” elements. Without reading the publish date, it is easy to assume this may have been written in the 1970s or 1990s. *The Rural Community* illustrates today’s problems are not new, and in fact have been around over 80 years.

Siberman, Dille, and Ahlin. *Common Waters: A Story of Life Along the Red River Valley*. Fargo: Institute for Regional Studies, North Dakota State University, 1997

Documents life around the river from an agricultural, transportation, and economic resource to primarily a source of leisure in modern times (as well as a flood risk). However, the river has become more of a civic entity, becoming a source of community pride and magnet for cultural diversity. Within the text a good, concise social and geologic history of the Red River exists.

Solkoff, Joel. *The Politics of Food*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1985.

Government subsidy programs of the 1970s encouraged big farms. Big farms encouraged, machinery, herbicide, genetic crops, and processed food. Agriculture, which consolidated, became big business, and a few corporations monopolized the industry. In times of record production, the world as a whole experienced a food shortage due to farm policy, boom and bust crop years, and the growing sophistication of foreign food habits.

Stanley, George F. *Toil and Trouble: Military Expeditions to Red River*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989.

Covers the exploration and defense of the valley region by the Canadian military from 1685 to 1870.

Strand, Mark, ed. *Every Place With a Name*. Bismark: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1993.

Photos and essays documenting North Dakota small towns, provides brief histories of nearly 30 communities.

Strange, Marty. *Family Farming, A New Economic Vision*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

Written within the 1980s farm crisis by the director of a northeastern Nebraska non-profit dealing with rural poverty, the book chronicles the transformation to large-scale industrial farming. In addition to contextual and analytical history, Strange offers solutions to solve what he sees as an attack on the “powerful cultural institution” of family farming.

Summers, Gene. “A Sociological Perspective on Rural Studies.” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* (August 1998), 640-644.

Rural studies began in the US around 1900, and for the next 50 years there was lively intellectual discussion and concern with rural well being. Rural residents were seen as integral components of an emerging American society. Around 1950 this was abandoned, and social scientists began feeling rural areas had been eclipsed by mass society. Summers continues by stating the mass society concept to be wrong, based primarily on two false principles: rural America was completely autonomous before WWII, and that rural and urban societies are diametrically opposed. Summers concludes that rural people continue to be a necessity to national economic health, still producing needed materials. However, the tone of today’s literature has largely ignored rural viability.

Summers, Gene. "Rural Community Development." *Annual Review of Sociology*, Volume 12 (1986), 347-371.

Discusses rural community development in the U.S. Traces its history, reviews community development's place within sociology, and contrasts the idea of emotional community development with physical development. Summers reviews three basic strategies for rural community development: authoritative intervention, community intervention, and radical reform.

Taylor, Miller Lee. *Urban-Rrural Problems*. Belmont, CA: Dickinson Publishing Company Inc., 1968.

Part of a series covering modern social problems. Meant for instructional use in a university setting. Text focuses on problems created by America's rapid urbanization. Taylor creates a very elitist and out-of-touch argument that reflects serious rural biases.

Tickamyer, Ann, and Cynthia Duncan. "Poverty and Opportunity Structure in Rural America." *Annual Review of Sociology*, Volume 16 (1990), 67-86.

The persistence of poverty in rural areas can be linked to limited opportunity structure. Many communities lack stable employment, upward mobility, community investment, and economic diversity. According to the authors, as outmigration continues, these problems will only get worse.

Thompson, Era Bell. *American Daughter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946.

Era Bell Thompson, prominent woman and writer, grew up in North Dakota. Living both in Steele County and Bismark, Thompson relates those experiences in her narrative. Covers her family's pursuits in flax farming, and the small but close knot African-American community they lived in.

Thompson, Tom, Jake MacDonald, and Shirley Sandrel. *Faces of the Flood*. Toronto: Stoddart Publishing, 1997.

A pictorial history of the 1997 Red River flood and its impact on Manitobans.

Toffler, Alvin. *Future Shock*. New York: Random House, 1970.

An excellent commentary on the rapidity of societal and technological change occurring in the world, and people's sociologic and emotional responses to contemporary changes. Not specifically about rural life, but touches on many rural issues, especially those concerning this study like technology, economics, and societal change.

Turner, John and C. Knute Semling, eds. *History of Clay and Norman Counties, Minnesota, Their People, Industries, and Institutions, Volumes I and II*. Indianapolis: Bowen and Company, 1918.

These volumes are similar to other county histories published throughout the country by Bowen and Company and others during the time.

Vidich, Arthur and Joseph Benjamin. *Small Town in Mass Society: Class, Power, and Religion in Rural Community*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Study centers on the rural New York community of Springdale. Vidich and Benjamin's best discussion comes in their chapter on conducting rural field research, though it has become a bit antiquated. So too, has their interpretation on rural life, which seems to suggest rural areas absent of socio-economic strife which mars urban relations.

Vinz, Mark, and Thom Tamarro, editors. *Imagining Home: Writing from the Midwest*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Collection of memoirs and essays describing the sense of place and community exhibited by the authors' geographic settings, found all over the Midwest and Northern Plains. Authors including Kathleen Norris, Bill Holm, and Paul Gruchow contributed to this very good anthology.

Vogeler, Ingolf. *The Myth of the Family Farm*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981.

Vogeler dedicated his book to "a new Populism in our lifetime." He would like to see progressive social change through the dismantling of large-scale agriculture and corporate control through more farm-labor alliances. Vogeler examines the dominance of corporate agriculture and its negative effect on rural communities.

Weaver, Will. *Red Earth, White Earth*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986.

Story of two boys growing up inside the White Earth Indian Reservation, in northwestern Becker County, MN. One Ojibwe, the other of Scandinavian decent, it's based on their multicultural friendship. Growing up, they experience rural and agricultural life, both modern and traditional, first hand. As adults, they both take very different paths, but return to their old haunts and reminisce.

Weaver, Will. *A Gravestone Made of Wheat*. St. Paul: Graywolf Press, 1989.

A collection of short stories centering on rural Minnesota life in and around the Wild Rice Watershed District, taking place over the last 100 years. One of the best fictional works on the region available.

Webb, Walter Prescott. *The Great Plains*. Boston: Ginn, 1931 (reprinted Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981).

The first historical work tackling the entire great plains as an independent subject.

Weld, Dr. Louis Dwight Harvell. "Social and Economic Survey of a Community in the Red River Valley." Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1915.

A professional, statistical and demographic survey of Ada conducted in the early 1900s. Weld, a sociologist at the University of Minnesota, presents a clear and thorough picture of what all facets of life must have been like at the time. He notes statistics on everything from length of a farmer's workday to percentages of city homes with indoor plumbing.

Wemett, William Marks. *Geography of North Dakota*. Fargo: Northern School Supply Co., 1929.

Deals extensively with geology and geography of the Red River Valley.

Wessel, James. *Trading the Future*. San Francisco: Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1983.

Chronicles the 1980s farm crisis from an agricultural production standpoint, based on some basic principles: production costs exceeded crop prices, and environmental crisis on rural landscapes. These paralleled economic trends: large firms were dominate, and export revenues did not counteract dependence on foreign oil.

Wilhilte, Donald, Deborah Wood, and Kelly Helm Smith, editors. *Planning for a Sustainable Future: The Case of the North American Great Plains*. Proceedings of the Symposium, Lincoln, Nebraska, May 8-10, 1995.

Defined as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” by the symposium, their version of sustainable development was primarily concerned with the environment and industrialization. The conference gathered a diverse group of participants to discuss the complex economic, environmental, and social issues currently facing the region.

Woodward, Mary Dodge, Mary Boyton Cowdry, ed. *The Checkered Years*. Caldwell, ID: The Caxton Printers, 1937.

Cowdry, Woodward’s granddaughter, presents Woodward’s diary during her residence on a North Dakota Bonanza Farm.

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AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE: DOCUMENTING CHANGE

511 Reeves B&B

<http://www.bbonline.com/nd/511reeves>

Accessed 2/7/01

Grand Forks, ND Bed and Breakfast. Site provides photographs and information on accommodations, which are available to overnight guests, small meetings, and weddings.

Action Realtors

<http://www.rrv.net/action>

Accessed 1/31/01

Based in Wahpeton, ND, site lists current properties for sale in the region.

Ada, City of

<http://www.rrv.net/ada-mn>

Accessed 1/31/01

Features city information, business and public directories, as well as tourist information.

AgDownload.com

<http://www.agdownload.com>

Accessed 2/1/01

Free shareware for agricultural applications. This no-frills site offers downloads in a variety of subjects: management, irrigation, crops, etc.

AgEcon Search: Research in Agricultural and Applied Economics

<http://agecon.lib.umn.edu>

Accessed 5/31/00

This search engine out of the University of Minnesota allows users to search academic journals for agricultural economics related articles, and then read full text.

AGFIND

<http://www.agfind.com>

Accessed 5/30/00

A search engine that, "places the web's agricultural resources under one umbrella search site to deliver the most reliable, up-to-date information on the agricultural industry. Now industry professionals have a single portal site to guide them to agricultural-related research, directories and e-commerce opportunities. AgFind.com places all these features under a single query box by which to retrieve accurate search results."

Agriculture in North Dakota

<http://www.gri-nd.com>

Accessed 5/23/00

With a revised mission, Ag. In North Dakota now aims to "supply grassroots information to the rest of the world about North Dakota Agriculture and Family farming in the Northern Plains." It

accomplishes this by providing market reports, precipitation results, ag. links, published reports, photos, and contacts.

Agriculture in the Red River Valley

<http://www.cropnet.com>

Accessed 1/31/01

Currently being totally redesigned, the site will offer consulting services, a directory of participating organizations, and other links.

Agricultural Institute Of Management in Saskatchewan, Inc.

<http://www.agri.gov.sk.ca/aims/online.htm>

Accessed 2/1/01

Based in Saskatchewan, Canada, they offer web-based classes in a variety of agricultural topics ranging from farm succession planning to creating ag. web sites. Classes range from \$20-\$95.

Agriculture Online

<http://www.agriculture.com>

Accessed 5/30/00

Online magazine features news, weather, classifieds, auction, and links. Interesting features include an extensive subject driven discussion group and personal web page bibliography.

Agricultural Sites

<http://www.uiuc.edu/~wardt/agsites.htm>

Accessed 2/1/01

A list of world-wide-web sites pertaining to agriculture compiled by an Illinois state extension agent.

Agricultural Utilization Research Institute

<http://www.auri.org>

Accessed 6/6/00

“AURI was created to foster long term economic benefit through increased business and employment opportunities to rural Minnesota through: the identification and creation of new markets for new or existing commodities, ingredients and products; the development of new uses or value improvements for Minnesota agricultural commodities.”

This nonprofit organization has offices in Morris, Crookston, Waseca, and St. Paul. Online access to ongoing programs is available, as well as resource guides and links. The links represent private, nonprofit, and government agencies dealing with modern agriculture. The vast majority of those linked are present in this web site survey.

AgriPlace

<http://www.agriplace.com>

Accessed 2/1/01

“AgriPlace gives grain and livestock producers, traders, input sellers, processors, feedlots, service providers and other end users easy, online access to each and unbiased information about the business of Agriculture. Buy and sell in real-time. AgriPlace operates as an e-commerce hub, providing strategic information and business services to customers. An unbiased, independent source. AgriPlace also provides unbiased market analysis, agronomic reports, strategic crop plans and other services designed to increase yield and profitability. Save time and money. By offering farmers a full-service, e-commerce hub where they can price, buy, sell, and deliver goods and services online, AgriPlace helps North American

agribusiness use the power of the Internet to save time, and money.” Based in Calgary with a Canadian focus, they will soon be launching a U.S. version.

AgriSurf

<http://www.agrisurf.com>

Accessed 5/30/00

“AgriSurf! is the worlds largest searchable agricultural WWW index. All the sites in AgriSurf! are hand picked by agricultural experts, not computer programmers. Although the sites are hand picked, we have an array of web robots to continually check the existence and content of these sites so that our links stay fresh and we can alert you to any major changes that sites undergo. AgriSurf!'s sister venture is The AgriSurfer, a weekly mailcast publication that keeps you up to date with all that is happening on the web agriculturally. The great thing about The AgriSurfer is that you can customize it so that you can get more of the specific info you want. When it comes right down to it, our mission is to improve the usability of the web for agriculturalists.”

Agri-ville

<http://www.agri-ville.com>

Accessed 2/1/01

Founded in 1997 this western Canadian site bills itself as, “your online farm community.” Accordingly, its organized into different ‘spaces,’ such as: community center, schoolhouse, town hall, and coffee shop. Users register, and then participate in online discussions on virtually any agricultural and rural topic. Users can also submit other information like news, links, and classifieds. This is definitely a top-notch site, and appears to get regular heavy traffic.

AgWeb.com

<http://www.agweb.com>

Accessed 5/5/00

Site provides ag. News, links, markets, etc. Similar to other sites, but supports active chat rooms and discussion group. Most conversation centers around current news: right now free trade and gun control. Discussion is not always centered directly on agriculture, as the gun debate would illustrate.

Agweek Online

<http://www.agweek.com>

Accessed 5/12/00

Agweek is a companion to published newsletter, operated by the Grand Forks Herald. Contains news, markets, weather, editorials, policy information, classifieds, and links. Also branches out into rural popular culture offering news items from outside agriculture specifically.

Altona, city of

<http://www.townofaltona.com>

Accessed 2/7/00

Located in Manitoba, this city site advertises Altona as a great place to live, visit, or work. Visitors can access a business directory, events calendar, and list of attractions.

Altona Evangelical Mennonite Church

<http://www.emmc.alatona.mb.ca>

Accessed 2/7/00

Site visitors can read church bulletins, find member contact information (under construction), and view a map.

American Farm Bureau
<http://www.fb.com>
Accessed 5/30/00

News, education materials, and links keep users in touch with rural and agricultural issues. Serves as the home site for state farm bureaus and their web pages.

A-Z Stamp Shop
<http://www.rrv.net/McGiffin/home.htm>
Accessed 1/13/01

Grand Forks stamp shop home page featuring inventory and ordering information.

Bed and Biscuit
<http://www.rrv.net/bedandbiscuit>
Accessed 1/31/01

Full service kennel in Barnesville, MN advertises its services.

Bethel Free Lutheran Church
<http://www.rrv.net/bflc>
Accessed 1/31/01

Located in Grafton, the site provides church information, events calendar, and message board.

Boulger Funeral Home
<http://www.bouglерfuneralhome.com>
Accessed 2/7/01

North Dakota Funeral Home business operating three locations: Boulger Funeral Home, Fargo; Frederickson Funeral Chapel, Kindred; and the Wildeman Funeral Home in Hillsboro. The web site lists services, contacts, and general pricing.

Border Real Estate
<http://www.border.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/7/01

Located in Altona, Manitoba, they sell commercial, residential, and farm property in the region. This newly developed site will offer property listings online.

BuyAg.Com
<http://www.buyag.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Online trading exchange where members (simple process to join) can openly trade farm equipment in an auction-type format. BuyAg, “specialize[s] in used tractor parts, farm equipment parts and all ag machinery parts including tractor salvage parts.”

Canadian Mennonite University
<http://www.McFed.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/13/00

Located in Winnipeg, this site is the online resource for the university.

Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP)
http://www.rural.gc.ca/crp_e.html
Accessed 5/23/00

“The 1998 Federal Budget confirmed funding of \$20 million over four years for the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP). This initiative is designed to support rural community development by adopting new approaches and practices to respond to rural development issues and concerns.

The CRP is, first of all, about operating differently within the federal government to ensure that federal programs, policies and activities provide a coordinated network of support to rural communities. It is being designed and implemented by an Interdepartmental Working Group, made up of representatives from 28 federal departments and agencies, and Rural Teams in each province and territory. The Rural Secretariat, within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, provides leadership and coordination for this cross-government approach.”

Government organization dedicated to rural community development as well as facilitating an increased rural voice in national concerns. Contains information on all sorts of rural issues, most not endemically Canadian. Organization promotes goals primarily through educational outreach and conferences. Site links to other rural Canadians on the web, grouped by categories such as fishing and e-commerce. Links to printed and multi-media publications are available on a wide range of topics. Site also contains a searchable, categorized directory of individuals and organizations relating to rural life.

Center for Farm Financial Management
<http://www.cffm.umn.edu>
Accessed 1/31/01

Out of the University of Minnesota, the center develops educational tools, usually in the form of computer software, for farm operators.

Center for Rural Policy and Development
<http://www.mankato.msus.edu/dept/ruralmn>
Accessed 6/6/00

“Established in 1997 by the Minnesota State Legislature, the Center for Rural Policy and Development conducts nonpartisan collaborative policy research across a variety of issues currently on the public agenda. Experts inside and outside Minnesota colleges and universities are assembled to consider the effects of economic and social forces on Greater Minnesota constituents and communities, and to propose ways for policymakers to enhance opportunities and quality of life throughout the state.

Research topics include education, health care, agriculture, environment, economic development, land use, human services, law enforcement, community relations, public utilities regulation, transportation, telecommunications, and the public-policy process itself, among others.”

Site gives descriptions of ongoing research projects, full text access to completed studies and newsletters, as well as staff and government contacts.

Center for Small Towns
<http://www.mrs.umn.edu/services/cst/>
Accessed 5/8/00

Headquartered in Morris, MN; Center for Small Towns is a joint effort between the University of Minnesota and the Blandin Foundation. The organization strives to provide community planning and education training to rural communities through educational outreach. They administrate and facilitate community-building seminars. Center for Small Towns also creates links between university students and rural communities by providing internships. In turn, students give technical advice to community members in areas such as web design. By visiting the web site, patrons can find organizational background, staff contacts, and links to other regional, local, and agricultural web sites.

CJUM Campus Radio 101.5 FM
<http://www.cjum.com>
Accessed 2/7/01

Station news and program guide. Also includes internal memos by staff to the volunteer DJs.

Clare Carlson, Campaign for ND Ag. Commissioner
<http://www.carlson2000.com>
Accessed 5/30/00

Includes biographical and contact information, and press releases. Illustrates one person's election attempt, outlining their platform and beliefs.

Clay County Abstract Company
<http://www.clayabstract.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Web site for abstract company located in the Red River Valley. Provides abstract services, title insurance, and real estate advice.

College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences (COAFES)
<http://www.coafes.umn.edu>
Accessed 5/23/00

An academic site from the University of Minnesota, and COAFES. Users may access the Minnesota Agriculture Project (MAP): "a structure, not an organization, to facilitate coordination and cooperation between agricultural related organizations. This structure has been developing for years but was finalized at an organizational meeting in Bloomington on June 7, 1993." Through conferences and task forces MAP hopes to improve economic viability of all sectors of agricultural production by increasing awareness, education, and dialogue. Their site reflects this, and contains an excellent discussion group on a variety of topics, as well as a help center to answer agricultural questions. Because the University operates this site, user may also access other school information such as academic programs, the Minnesota Extension Office, and faculty information. A wide range of additional information can also be found through an easily accessible internal search engine. While all University of Minnesota related Ag. Pages are excellent, this one ranks among the upper echelon along with the Extension Office and a few others.

Columbia Mall
<http://www.shopcolumbiamall.com>
Accessed 2/13/00

Site for Grand Forks, ND mall. Web patrons can view mall hours and events, get directions, and see a store directory. Viewers can also create their own shopping list by browsing items available at various stores.

Communicating for Agriculture
<http://www.cainc.org>
Accessed 6/6/00

"Communicating for Agriculture was begun more than 26 years ago, and has become the united voice for everyone who enjoys a rural lifestyle, regardless of occupation.

The idea was simple... to band together main street businesses, farmers and ranchers, to make sure that those of us living in rural America have access to all the goods and services that our City Cousins take for granted. Now technology is making it ever easier for people to choose a rural lifestyle -- and CA continues to be a leader in bringing technology to rural areas."

A nonpartisan, nonprofit group, Communicating For Ag. provides advocacy, programming, news, and a high profile international exchange program. In addition, the web site also provides membership information and links to other ag. and rural related sites.

Community and Rural Development Institute

<http://www.cardi.cornell.edu>

Accessed 6/6/00

“Cornell's Community and Rural Development Institute works to enhance life quality and social and personal well-being for the people of New York State. CARDI links professionals and elected officials who share a concern for community development and policymaking, especially in rural communities. We bring together Cornell University departments and programs, Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations, local governments and community organizations to cultivate creative collaborations that bridge traditional institutional boundaries. CARDI coordinates Cornell research, extension and teaching in five broad areas: Community Development, Economic Development, Environmental Management, Human Services, and Local Governance & Leadership.”

Extensive Institute backed by an academic master's program in rural development at Cornell University. They publish, conduct, and fund academic research in the field, and run two academic listservs, accessible through the home page.

Community Supported Agriculture: Robyn Van En Center

<http://www.csacenter.org>

Accessed 5/23/00

“CSAs bring together community members, farmers and agricultural land in a relationship of mutual support based on an annual commitment to one another, a commitment that ensures the survival of local agriculture today and for future generations.” Site contains a resource list of other sustainable agricultural organizations and organic farmers from around the country, a database of CSA farms all over the nation, and a list of publications. The site goes further to define community supported agriculture: “CSA is a relationship of mutual support and commitment between local farmers and community members who pay the farmer an annual membership fee to cover the production costs of the farm. In turn, members receive a weekly share of the harvest during the local growing season. The arrangement guarantees the farmer financial support and enables many small- to moderate-scale organic family farms to remain in business. Ultimately, CSA creates “agriculture-supported communities” where members receive a wide variety of foods harvested at their peak of ripeness, flavor and vitamin and mineral content.”

Community Toolbox

<http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu>

Accessed 6/5/00

Exhaustive web directory aimed at community organizers for rural development. The site claims to have thousands of links on 150 different topics. You can register online to get special updates and other information. If they keep use statistics this could be invaluable in gauging rural resident's web use.

Concordia College

<http://www.cord.edu>

Accessed 5/30/00

Online resource for Concordia College, a private four-year institution in Moorhead, NW.

Cooperstown/Griggs Economic Development Corporation
<http://www.cgndedc.com>
Accessed 6/5/00

“The current EDC is the end result of a few people who gathered on Saturday mornings with the idea that something had to be done to spur economic activity in the midst of an unprecedented Ag crisis. The earliest meetings were held in February of 98', with the group growing to those listed above by May.

In the April, May timeframe we researched the possibility of applying for the EZ grant for “out migration” that our legislators had sponsored at the national level. Finding out we were eligible led to a partnership with Steele County and a very intense 5 months of meetings, planning, and accumulation of data.

Formally organizing in August of 98', we continued to meet on a weekly basis and work on the plan we were developing for the EZ application. By the October 9h application deadline we were convinced our plan had a good chance of placing high in the national competition. Even if we didn't get the EZ designation, we had a plan in place that would act as a road map in economic development into the new millennium.

On January 13th, 1999 we were awarded the only EZ grant for out migration in the nation. We have since learned that our grant rose to the top in all 6 categories of scoring in the grant evaluation process, beating out 66 other applications from across the nation.

The original grant application was for 4 million a year for 10 years. That amount has been cut in half to 2 million a year for the first 2 years, with further funding yet to be allocated. It is our hope that the funding for the remaining 8 years can be allocated in next year's Federal budget. It has literally taken the remainder of 99' for the EZ Board to get all the paperwork and criterion in place to move forward on the individual projects that make up the overall plan.

As an EDC, we are now at the point where the rubber-meets-the-road. We will very shortly have a good estimate of what is anticipated to be about the 5000 volunteer hours it has taken to get us too this point. We now have to somehow put the funding together to hire people to full time bird-dog the projects through the complicated funding processes.

We have a good overall plan, a few perks offered through the EZ designation, and a very dedicated EDC membership, but the effort ahead of us is still an uphill battle in a rural setting. The ready access too corporate or venture capital that exists in most urban settings is simply not available to us. Even with the EZ designation, the bulk of the project funding is still going to fall on the local area that has been subjected to several years of economic disasters related to the dominant Ag economy.

Probably the most important lesson learned in the past 16 months is that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that we have control of the dimmer switch controlling how bright or dim it gets from here on out. The EDC membership has not wavered in its commitment to economic development, but has come to the realization that this is going to be a long and arduous process. There is no lack of willingness to do whatever it takes to move forward in this effort, but patience is in short supply.

The creation and maintenance of this website itself, is a volunteer effort. Please take the time to check it out, and offer any suggestions or comments you might have as we continue down the road in this effort.”

I included the entire piece because it illustrates exactly the kind of effort we need to be recording. Not only an organizational history, it contains meeting minutes, extended news items, job postings, and commercial real estate listings. This is one of the most important locally produced sites.

Cooperstown, city of
<http://www.cooperstownnd.com>
Accessed 6/5/00

Cooperstown, ND web site featuring the common links to schools, churches, businesses, and events calendars. The most interesting piece is the “alumni” section. This portion is dedicated not only to school alumni, but former residents of Cooperstown in general. Out migration is so prevalent, this was created in an attempt to reunite out-of-touch friends.

Dakota Resource Council
<http://www.worc.org/member.html#drc>
Accessed 2/1/01

Founded in 1979, this Dickinson headquartered nonprofit action group aims to protect North Dakota's environment, rural community, and agricultural economy. Simple web page provides a brief mission statement and contact information. It is hosted by a larger group, the Western Organization of Resource Councils (<http://www.worc.org>), representing councils in the western U.S.

DirectAg.com
<http://www.DirectAg.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

Contains information on weather, markets, and news. Patrons can research farm products, set up credit options, and buy online; as well as participate in ag-related chat groups. Links to companies selling products on the site are also available.

Educating About Agriculture
<http://www.ageducate.org>
Accessed 5/31/00

Administered by the American Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture. Aims to educate city dwellers about farming culture, methods, and produce through publications, lesson plans, community awareness campaigns, and a FAQ.

Electronic Solutions
<http://www17.inetba.com/electronicsollutions3/>
Accessed 2/7/01

Located in Hallock, MN, Electronic Solutions has serviced and sold all types of audio, video, and communications equipment since 1997. Site offers an online catalog.

Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Locations
<http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/library/collections/spk.html>
Accessed 2/13/00

Located in UND's library, the department holds both University archives and regional archival collections. Web users can obtain general and contact information, as well as access collection guides.

Farm Business Management
<http://www.mgt.org/fbm/index.htm>
Accessed 1/31/01

Classes and agricultural management programs offered through 8 Minnesota universities at 85 locations. The program is headquartered in Rochester. Most classes are two or four credits, with 60 credits needed to graduate. Degrees in farm management, specialty crop management, small business, computerized small business, and lamb and wool management are available.

Farm Connect
<http://www.farmconnect.com>
Accessed 2/7/01

Farmer-owned cooperative based in Crookston, MN, and supported in part by Northern great Plains, Inc. Mission is to improve farmer profitability by, "aggressively identifying, creating, and meeting market needs through strategic relationships with processors and end users."

Farmer's Guide
http://www.rural.org/Farmers_Guide
Accessed 5/31/00

Offers annotated lists of web links geared to aid agricultural and rural people on the web.

Farmers Hotline
<http://www.farmershotline.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

“The Ag Business Group consists of *Farmers Hot Line*, *Farmer's Digest*, *Farm Equipment Guide*, *agdeal.com*, *agdealmall*, and *agauction*. On our website you will find the following features: “

- °Regional advertising and niche publications.
- °List database searchable by State, Industry Title, and Survey Responses.
- °Equipment database, listing over 63,000 items (agdeal.com) currently for sale.
- °Auction results database, listing thousands of actual auction results from recent equipment sales.
- °Equipment specifications database. Trade show and auction calendars. Agricultural Links and Suppliers.

FarmPhoto.com
<http://www.farmphoto.com>
Accessed 5/15/00

Site to post, view, and download photos concerned with agriculture. Wide range of photographs in many categories, including aerial, humor, livestock, and machinery. Contains 'home grown' photos by agriculturalists around the country.

Farms.com
<http://www.farms.com>, <http://www.eharvest.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

One-stop site featuring news, markets, weather, classifieds, and job postings. Users can also find information on specific agricultural topics, search an agriculture Search engine, or participate in a chat room. Mission Statement:

Content includes news, weather, markets, links and decision tools which have been harvested to ensure that the producer has the most up to date information to make timely and informed decisions. A community for producers and agri-businesses with common interests to meet, share ideas, discuss strategies and make decisions. A platform for producers and the industry to conduct commerce on-line. Producers and agri- business can purchase their farm inputs, buy or sell cattle, hogs and poultry, or even find the perfect employee.

Farm Safety and Health Information
<http://www.bac.umn.edu/~fs/index.html>
Accessed 1/31/01

Site provides links to press releases and publications, statistics, descriptions of current agricultural research, and other related web links.

Farm Times
<http://www.farmtimes.com>
Accessed 5/15/00

“Farm Times is a monthly rural living publication whose success is dependent on the success of readers, advertisers and individual communities within its service area.

Farm Times' objectives are twofold: first, to provide quality agricultural and rural living information to its readers; second, to expand its service area to include all rural communities and service

providers within the Intermountain West and Pacific Northwest. This is to include growers and entities involved in agriculture.”

Internet version of Farm Times packaged with Beef Times. Site also provides growing and technical information, and resource guide.

Finley, city of

<http://www.finleynd.com>

Accessed 2/1/01

Site promotes Finley, ND as an active rural community with many amenities. They tout their “ruralness,” which includes safe streets, close community ties, and available space. At the same time, they stress their available attractions like a golf course and pool, as well as their relative proximity to Fargo-Moorhead. Site users can also view a list of business contacts, learn area history, and search a community calendar database.

Floral Expressions

<http://www.floralxpressions.com>

Accessed 2/1/01

This Cooperstown, ND business has been open for eleven years, and offers a full selection of flowers, plants, and gifts. Site provides photos, merchandise descriptions, and contact information.

Fort Abercrombie

<http://www.rrv.net/fort-abercrombie>

Accessed 1/31/01

Local museum in Abercrombie, ND. The web site is currently being constructed.

Fosston, City of

<http://www.fosston.com>

Accessed 1/31/01

News, events, business listings, etc. for the city.

Friesen’s Book Store

<http://www.friesens.com>

Accessed 2/7/00

Altona, MB store established in 1923. They appear to specialize in high-quality book printing and binding. Visitors can learn company history and contact information, take a virtual tour of the production facilities, get product descriptions, and even apply for a job.

Glacial Retriever Kennels

<http://www.rrv.net/glacialretrievers>

Accessed 1/31/01

Breeder, trainer, and guide service based in Karlstad, MN. Markets services and registered Labrador, English Springer Spaniel, and German Shorthair puppies on a national scale. In addition to providing background information, site lets users know when puppies are available. Owner is also a professional guide who offers hunting trips in several states.

Global Television - Winnipeg

<http://www.winnipeg.globaltv.com>

Accessed 2/7/01

Website for Global Television Network. Provides TV schedules, news, gossip, and links.

Graham's Groves Saskatoons
<http://www.grahamsgroves.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/7/00

Located west of Winnipeg, the farm operates a Saskatoon berry farm and other agricultural entertainment. Actual visitors to the farm may pick their own Saskatoons, buy pre-picked berries, or purchase a line of products from juices to pies. A corn maze and labyrinth also occupy patrons. The web site includes contact information and maps. For those not wanting to drive, there is a 2500-foot grass strip runway.

Grand Forks, ND; city web page
<http://www.grandforksgov.com>
Accessed 5/8/00

Official city site provides government, business, citizen, and tourist information. Site patrons can access city maps and information, police department, visitor materials, meeting minutes, jobs, news, and community calendar. Links to other area sites are also listed.

Great Plains
<http://www.gps.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Home page for Great Plains software, one of the country's foremost producers of accounting software. The company is headquartered in Fargo, ND, and is an excellent example of high tech industry in the region.

Great Plains Institute For Sustainable Development
<http://www.gpisd.net>
Accessed 6/5/00

"The Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the citizens of the Great Plains across many borders as they wrestle with issues affecting the long-term viability of their communities, the productivity of their economic enterprises, the quality of their environment and the prudent management of their resources. Located in Minneapolis, GPISD is a tenant in the Phillips Eco-Enterprise Center."

Also currently developing, "an interactive, web-based. library, searchable by region, product or key words. Carefully designed to attract new stories and facilitate the replication of ideas, the web site will contain detailed stories, photographs, links to the subjects' web sites and full contact information for each innovation." Good site and organization, also hosts "Great Plains Dialogue" a fairly active list-serve dealing with rural issues.

Griggs County 319
<http://www.griggscounty319.com>
Accessed 6/5/00

Water quality and environmental organization seeking to improve agricultural practices in Griggs county, ND. Concerned with large scale farming methods such as feedlots, and their impact on the surrounding environment. Contains many news items and pictures chronicling their effort.

Griggs County Central Web Page
<http://www.griggsschools.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Home page for Griggs County public schools. Contains staff lists, upcoming events, classes, community links (very few), and sports information.

Griggs County Sentinel-Courier
http://www.corpcomm.net/~devlinpublications/gcsc_top.htm
Accessed 5/23/00

Online version of print newspaper.

Griggs/Steele Empowerment Zone
<http://www.ezec.gov/Communit/agassiz.html>
Accessed 5/23/00

Informational page describing the Griggs/Steele Empowerment Zone providing text, maps, and contact personnel. Access to the national Empowerment Zone web page provides more general information. Empowerment Zones are a joint federal, state, and local effort to help economically depressed areas through employer development, grants, loans, and citizen involvement.

Guide to Records Concerning Recovery From the Flood
<http://www.moorhead.msus.edu/archives/guides/floodguide.html>
Accessed 2/13/00

Guide to archival resources pertaining to the 1997 Red River Valley flood available at the Northwestern Minnesota Historical Center, on the Minnesota State University - Moorhead campus. Lists published, documentary, and oral interviews among materials. Other collection guides may be accessed via the center's home page: <http://www.mnstate.edu/archives>.

Hallock Public Library
<http://www.nlln.org/aurora/nwrl/hallock.htm>
Accessed 2/7/01

The Minnesota institution serves Kittson County and its schools as a library and multimedia center. This is an excellent site representing a northeastern valley rural library. Site patrons can search the library catalog, get all types of library info, and even suggest items for purchase.

Halstad Elevator Company
<http://www.halstadelevator.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Farmer owned co-op operating elevators in Halstad, MN, Grandin, and Hillsboro, ND. Web site offers current market prices, company information and contact personnel, local weather, and other related items.

Headwaters Regional Development Commission
<http://www.hrhc.org>
Accessed 6/6/00

Commission serves local government, organizations, elderly, and business in Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, and Mahanomen counties in northern Minnesota. Headquartered in Bemidji, MN, the commission funds and coordinates development programs, provides statistical information, and produces programming consistent with their mission.

The Heartland Center
<http://www.4w.com/heartland>
Accessed 5/15/00

Based in Nebraska, this private non-profit organization provides education and resources for rural communities. Links, online materials, publication lists, and links.

Hendrum, city of
<http://www.rrv.net/hendrum>
Accessed 1/31/01

Marketing the city as affordable, desirable, and commutable (to Fargo, Crookston, and Grand Forks). The city is now offering free lots and one year of free utilities to new home builders.

Hillsboro Banner
<http://www.hillsborobanner.com>
Accessed 2/7/01

Weekly newspaper of Hillsboro, ND. Web site offers full-text articles, passed columns, classifieds, as well as advertising and subscription information.

HomeFarm.com
<http://homefarm.com>
Accessed 5/15/00

One-stop site includes generally offered things such as markets, links, and weather, but serves additionally as an online journal archives HomeFarm.com provides full-text archives to nine agricultural journals.

Innovis Health/Dakota Clinic
<http://www.innovishealth.com>
Accessed 2/13/00

Medical group with clinics all over the Red River Valley from Wahpeton to Fosston to Thief River Falls. Service and clinic information, physician directory, and employment listings are all available.

Institute For Regional Studies
<http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/ndirs>
Accessed 2/13/00

Excellent page detailing the Institute's general information, publications, and holdings. Extensive records descriptions, finding aids, and biographical history are available online for this regional archive headquartered at NDSU.

Jacobson Studio
<http://www.jacobsonstudio.com>
Accessed 2/1/01

Started out of a Finley home in the 1970s, the business moved to Mayville as it expanded in the 1980s. Now it is a full service photography studio. The site promotes the business and provides sample pictures, but no business is conducted on the web.

Journal of Extension
<http://www.joe.org>
Accessed 5/15/00

Site features an online, searchable, full text archive for the Journal of Extension. Contains journals from present back to 1987.

Kansas State University: Research and Extension - Agricultural Economics Library
<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/agec2/welcome.htm>
Accessed 5/30/00

Extensive clearinghouse for publications on ag. economics and farm business produced by the Kansas Extension office. Files are downloadable in PDF format, and free. Topics cover a wide range of issues from harvesting to business methods.

Kelly's Chrysler Center
<http://www.kellychrysler.com>
Accessed 2/1/00

Car dealership in Ada, MN. Web visitors can browse dealer's new and used inventory, calculate financing options, and contact salespeople.

Kindred School District #2
<http://www.kindred.k12.nd.us>
Accessed 2/7/01

District serves the North Dakota communities of Leonard, Hickson, Davenport, Oxbow, Walcott, and Kindred and comprises 720 students. Grades K-2 are held in Davenport while 3-12 attend Kindred. The site contains events schedule, student handbook, course descriptions, High School newspaper, and links.

Kroeplin, Kenneth
<http://www.state.nd.us/lr/99senate/bios/kroeplin.html>
Accessed 2/1/01

Kroeplin serves the state senate out of Hope, ND. Web page provides his stances on issues, a short biography, and contact information including email.

The Land
<http://www.the-land.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Online version of *The Land*, self-promoted as Minnesota's favorite agricultural magazine. Features news, classifieds, calendar, message board, and article archive.

Linder Farm Network
<http://www.rrfn.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

Red River Farm Network is a series of syndicated daily farm programs dealing with Red River agriculture. Involves stations in western Minnesota and the eastern half of North Dakota. Site patrons can get radio personality info, participating stations, and sponsor links.

Loretel Systems
<http://www.loretel.com>
Accessed 2/1/01

Full service phone company with offices in Ada and Pelican Rapids, MN. Offers phone and internet service, long distance, cellular, and 800 numbers. Site describes their services and offers contact information. The web page also supports the employee newsletter, which may or may not be found in print form.

Lower Valley Elk
<http://www.lowervalleyelk.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Farm near Barnesville, MN raises North American elk and Australian Lowline cattle. Visitors to the site can buy related products and view the livestock.

MacFarlane Pheasant Farm: Online Store
<http://www.pheasant.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Though Janesville, Wisconsin is far from the Red River Valley, MacFarlane Farms web business superbly illustrates specialty markets and growing trends in modern agriculture. Visitors can purchase anything from pheasant chicks to kangaroo meat to videos.

MayPort Farmers Co-op
<http://www.mayportfarmerscoop.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Co-op strives to provide fair markets and reliable service and supply to customers, while making profits for their member/owners. Begun in 1994, they now have 40 employees serving Traill and Steele Counties in ND. In addition to organizational information, this site provides market statistics, crop data and requirements, member message board, and contacts.

Mayville, Portland; ND
<http://www.mayport-online.com>
Accessed 6/5/00

Community information, business and church directories, and a community calendar. Also contains tourist information such as maps and recreation.

Mayville State University
<http://www.masu.nodak.edu>
Accessed 5/30/00

Online resource for the only four-year university within the project boundaries.

Minnesota Ag. Education Leadership Council
<http://www.maelc.state.nm.us>
Accessed 5/31/00

Promotes ag. education and ag. literacy in an age of changing agricultural practices. Conducts surveys and projects, such as the state fair survey, which attempted to raise awareness about food origins (the fact that food comes from farms and not stores). AJELC also awards grants to other organizations furthering their mission. Site is prominently linked to Future Farmers of America, and the Urban High School of Agricultural Sciences (a planned charter school in the Twin Cities). Site contains meeting minutes, calendar of events, links, membership information, and press releases.

Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station
<http://www.maes.umn.edu>
Accessed 5/15/00

The Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station provides support for all types of agriculture through scientific research. Users may read about current research efforts, find staff and station locations, and search publications.

Minnesota Beef Council
<http://www.mnbeef.org>
Accessed 5/23/00

This site is targeted at non-agriculturalists with minimal knowledge (who may harbor dissent) of the beef industry. Users may find assurance of meat quality, industry background, trivia, recipes, and educational materials produced for school children.

Minnesota Buffalo Association
<http://www.mnbison.org>
Accessed 1/31/01

The organization promotes buffalo consumption by listing health information and providing recipes. The site lists members and contact information by county, provides an organizational events calendar, lists board contacts, and operates a message board for those wishing to buy, sell, or trade bison or bison-related materials.

Minnesota Center for Rural Health
<http://www.ruralcenter.org/mcrh/>
Accessed 5/15/00

Organization dedicated to improving rural health care through publications, provider recruitment, low interest loans, grants, and other proactive outreach. This site contains several newsletters online, doctor information, community calendar, and contact records.

Minnesota Corn Processors
<http://www.mcp.net>
Accessed 5/23/00

MCP, based in Marshall Minnesota, has interests in California, Minnesota, and Nebraska. MCP produces corn syrup and ethanol. Page contains company information and community and industry links.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
<http://www.mda.state.mn.us>
Accessed 5/23/00

Online access to all Minnesota Department of Agriculture publications and services, including: booklets, newsletters, weather, contact information, links, food safety, emergency assistance, and internal departmental and state agency information.

Minnesota Festival of Fairs
<http://www.minnesotafairs.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Main site with links to county fairs all over Minnesota. Visitors can search on their county of choice to receive fair information.

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture
<http://www.misa.umn.edu>
Accessed 5/23/00

“The Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA) is a unique partnership between the College of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Sciences at the University of Minnesota and the Sustainers' Coalition, a group of individuals and non-profit organizations including: Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Land Stewardship Project, Minnesota Food Association, The Minnesota Project, Organic Growers and Buyers Association, and Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota.

The purpose of MISA is to bring together the diverse interests of the agricultural community with interests from across the University community in a@ cooperative effort to develop and promote sustainable agriculture in Minnesota and beyond.”

Another University of Minnesota page, patrons can: access organizational calendar; read press releases, news, and a newsletter; as well as access publications and pages of participating organizations.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: Red River Valley Ecoregion

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/basins/redriver/rrvalley.html>

Accessed 5/15/00

Contains scientific data and information on Red River Valley concerning water quality, water use, and ecological factors. Gives geographic, geological, and ecological descriptions of the region.

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency: Wild Rice Watershed

<http://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/basins/redriver/wildrice.html>

Accessed 5/15/00

Contains scientific data and information on the Wild Rice watershed concerning water quality, water use, and ecological factors. Gives geographic, geological, and ecological descriptions of the region.

Minnesota Rural Electric Association

<http://www.mrea.org>

Accessed 5/8/00

The Minnesota Rural Electrification Association (NIREA) provides information, training, and education concerning electricity and safety. Site features include online access to newsletter, community calendar, related web links, along with educational and informational material dealing with electricity. The best site feature, though very under utilized, are two discussion groups. Users may post questions or comments. Added in November, 1999; the group had only one posted message as of the review date. The second discussion group, more unique among similar web discussion and chat groups in the subject area, was a group specifically designed for teenagers. Similar in form to the general discussion group, “teen traffic” specifically caters to that age group.

Minnesota Rural Education Association

<http://www.mnrea.org>

Accessed 5/15/00

“The MREA is an association of 150 school districts located in non-metropolitan Minnesota. We represent about forty percent of the state's independent school districts. The organization was founded in 1985 by a group of school board members and administrators who believed that non-metro school districts needed a clearer voice in St. Paul. The MREA is an inclusive, grass-roots organization. Our members include school districts, education agencies, and individuals. Our Board of Directors includes teachers, school board members, and administrators.”

Headquartered in Alexandria, the MREA boasts a high level of membership in greater Minnesota. Their site gives legislative and news updates, and. posts a calendar for future meetings.

Minnesota Rural Partners

<http://www.minnesotaruralpartners.org>

Accessed 5/15/00

“In 1999, Minnesota Rural Partners created. Minnesota Rural Partners, Inc, a separate 501(c)(3) designated, non-profit organization. NIRP, Inc. is essentially a mechanism for Minnesota Rural Partners to take on projects that benefit rural communities and pass through project dollars into rural communities. NIRP, Inc. makes possible the implementation of projects and planning through private and other contributions that couldn't be possible through a federally funded organization. As the designated state rural development council, Minnesota Rural Partners joins similar organizations in 36 other states and territories;

a collaborative of federal agencies and non-government organizations; a national administrative office; and an educational support center, to form The National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP). The national network provides direct access for state and grassroots partners to work with federal agencies regionally and in Washington to resolve rural issues and problems, cutting through red tape.”

Site serves as organizational calendar and outreach tool to further MRP's mission. Site contains resources, contact information, news updates, and upcoming meetings.

Minnesota Rural Water Association

<http://www.mrwa.com>

Accessed 5/8/00

The Minnesota Rural Water Association provides information, educational outreach, and contact information for water related issues. Site seemed to be slanted towards drinking water and water treatment. Site patrons can locate calendar of upcoming events and training sessions, job postings (predominantly water treatment positions from around the state), applicable legislation overviews, and related web links.

Moorhead State University

<http://www.moorhead.msus.edu/home>

Accessed 5/30/00

Online resource for Moorhead State University; Moorhead, MN.

Montana Heritage Project: Living Memory Community Archives

<http://www.folkways.org>

Accessed 5/31/00

Set up by students, its purpose is two fold: disseminate local Montana history, and teach others how to begin similar projects in their area. This site is very new and under construction. The final product remains to be seen. What exists today are great snapshots of a few communities tracing their entire history to the present. The authors are also community participants, and the wonderful personal nature of the essays comes through. This should serve as a good model of local grass roots history on the web.

Morris, City of

<http://www.town.morris.mb.ca>

Accessed 2/7/00

Provides town history and current data, events calendar, list of attractions, and real estate opportunities.

Mrs. Olson's Lefse

<http://www.mrsolsonslfse.com>

Accessed 1/31/01

Located in Gonvick, MN, Mrs. Olson's Lefse markets a variety of ethnically Norwegian products. In addition to lefse, site visitors can order coffee, fish breeding, lingonberry preserves, gift packs, and others.

National Agricultural Statistics Service

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/>

Accessed 6/5/00

Contains wide range of agricultural, economic, and demographic census information for rural America.

National Association of Towns and Townships and The National Center for Small Communities
<http://www.natat.org>
Accessed 6/6/00

Site accesses both federal organizations. Both aim to improve rural life by strengthening local government and its leaders. They do this primarily through coordinating federal, state, and local agencies. These sites provide online access to that contact information.

David Fricke, a board member of NATAT, is Executive Director of the Minnesota Association of Townships. One ongoing project is the Millennium Community program, which honors towns for excellence for strong economic and civic leadership. Fosston, MN, just north of the Wild Rice Watershed District, is a Millennium Community.

National Farm Family Coalition
<http://www.nffc.net>
Accessed 2/5/01

Founded in 1986 to serve as a national link for grassroots organizations concerned with small-scale agriculture and rural life. Current membership includes 33 organizations in 33 states. The site offers member links, news releases, and a newsletter archive.

Nordic Fiberglass Inc.
<http://www.nordicfiberglass.com>
Accessed 2/7/01

Begun in Devils Lake, ND in 1970, the company now has plants in Devils Lake and Warren, MN. They produce high quality fiberglass products used in exterior industrial electrical applications for the world market.

Norman County Extension Service
http://www3.extension.umn.edu/county/main/master.asp?county_id=54
Accessed 5/23/00

Norman County branch of the University of Minnesota Extension office. Gives contact information and office hours, county information, staff, programs, and calendar. Also provides access to Extension home page (<http://www3.extension.umn.edu>).

Norman County West
<http://www.new.k12.mn.us>
Accessed 5/31/00

Home page for Norman County West public schools. Geared towards community residents and students. Contains community calendar, lunch calendar, faculty list, student programs, and useful links (search engines, newspapers, weather, etc.).

North Central Agricultural Service, Inc.
<http://www.landspecialists.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Located in Olivia, MN, North Central Ag. Service serves the upper Midwest and Northern Great Plains. They offer farm real estate brokerage, farm management, real estate investments, farm appraisals, computerized real estate auctions.

North Dakota Agriculture Business

<http://www.dakotaland.com/business/nodak/agriculture.htm>

Accessed 5/23/00

A no-frills site containing links to businesses and individual farms throughout North Dakota, as well as a few state government pages. Part of larger "DakotaLand" site, which claims to be the largest index to North and South Dakota web sites of all types.

North Dakota Ag Links

<http://www.ndaglinks.com>

Accessed 5/23/00

Claims to be the premier list of North Dakota agricultural links: "The purpose of this site is to provide the agriculture community a central site (index page) for locating Ag. related businesses, equipment, manufacturers producers, hunting & fishing guides, links to agricultural news services and local markets."

North Dakota Ag Statistics Service

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/nd/>

Accessed 5/15/00

Agricultural statistics for North Dakota and nation, as well as general ND information. Contains highly visible links to relating organizations and offices. Also includes weather information, publications, and bulletins.

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives

<http://www.ndarec.com>

Accessed 6/6/00

Organization serves as a clearinghouse for, all ND electric cooperatives, offering information and links to each. In addition, organization is an advocate for ND interests. Site contains not only organizational and electrical news, information, and regulations; but, ND history, tourism, and facts as well. Headquartered in Mandan, ND.

North Dakota Department of Agriculture

<http://www.state.nd.us/agr/>

Accessed 5/15/00

Features statistics, information, publications, and links for agriculture in North Dakota; as well as laws, legislation, and regulations.

North Dakota Farm Bureau

<http://www.fb.com/ndfb>

Accessed 5/23/00

Fairly basic site provides users with online access to farm bureau programs, publications, and member services information (travel discounts, optional insurance, credit card). Site also has agricultural facts, membership form, and events calendar. Contains a few links on ag., govt., and rural issues, and policy.

North Dakota Museum of Art

<http://www.ndmoa.com>

Accessed 2/7/01

The museum located in Grand Forks was founded in the mid 1970s, "to bring universally significant art, artists, performers, humanists, and cultural events to rural America." They collect

contemporary, international art. The site contains a map and organizational information, online gift shop, as well as visual access to exhibits and the collection.

North Dakota State University
<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu>
Accessed 5/30/00

Online resource for North Dakota State University; Fargo, ND.

NDSU Extension Service
<http://www.ext.nodak.edu>
Accessed 5/15/00

Home page for the state of North Dakota extension service. Provides a wealth of information on agriculture including: practical and technical advice, calendars, online education, news, publications, etc. Users also find an ag. Search engine, extension office and staff directory, as well as other applicable links.

North Dakota Extension News and Other Information
<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/extnews/>
Accessed 7/6/00

Branch of NDSU's Extension service web page provides news releases and articles. Updated daily, the news consists of anything from ag. And market reports to Tom Isern's "Plains Folk" column.

North Dakota Wheat Commission
<http://www.ndwheat.com>
Accessed 5/23/00

Contains information under these headings:

- °wheat commission: programming; staff and county representative contact information
- °wheat information: markets and statistics; species-specific information; and crop progress reports. food &
- °nutrition: recipes, fan activities for children.
- °industry news: newsletter, news, press releases, events, and invaluable annotated resource list.

Nicely designed, fairly useful site. The resource list is by far the site's best feature, containing: North Dakota and regional links, government agencies, other organizations, and media links.

Northern Great Plains Initiative
<http://www.northerngreatplains.org>
Accessed 6/6/00

"Established in September 1997, the Northern Great Plains Initiative for Rural Development strives to serve, support, and promote community development in rural areas of the Northern Great Plains by furthering practices consistent with the recommendations of the Northern Great Plains Rural Development Commission. The NGP Initiative serves the five state region of Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota as well as the Canadian province of Manitoba."

Access to project reports, newsletters, staff information, and survey results. A closer look at the survey may provide insight on how to construct those done for this project.

Northern Great Plains Rural Development Commission
<http://www.rrtrade.org/ngp>
Accessed 6/5/00

"The Northern Great Plains Rural Development Commission was established by an act of Congress in August 1994. The purpose of the Commission was to "identify and study the economic development ... needs of the Northern Great Plains and develop a 10-year plan that makes

recommendations and establishes priorities to address the needs.” (Public Law 103-318 103d Congress [sic])”

Produces publications on facets of rural life such as infrastructure and telecommunications. Web site gives online access to newsletter, staff contacts, and reports. Though not directly linked, site is an offshoot of the Red River Trade Council (<http://www.rrtrade.org>) based at the University of Minnesota - Crookston.

Northland Scopes

<http://www.northlandscopes.com>

Accessed 1/31/01

Started by a dairy farmer whose farm was no longer viable, Northland scopes based in Hawley, MN produces handcrafted kaleidoscopes and teliedoscopes. The site provides product and ordering information.

Northwest Regional Development Commission

<http://www.nwrdc.org>

Accessed 2/7/01

Headquartered in Warren, MN, this nonprofit agency serves the counties of: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau. They strive to maintain the regions economic strength and improve the quality of life. The agency operates various programs including: economic development, enterprise fund, Arts Council, and Farm Wrap, a new award-winning program to help those faced with leaving agriculture.

Northwestern Mental Health Center

<http://www.nwmhc.org>

Accessed 5/8/00

Northwestern Mental Health Center is a private nonprofit provider serving northwestern Minnesota, including Norman and Mahnomen counties. They provide the full range of mental health services, catering to the rural communities within their focus area. Site patrons may locate maps to clinics, staff information, or fill out a quick mental assessment survey. The site seemed to stress care for abused children, alcohol dependency, and disaster relief (specifically relating to 1997 flood aftermath).

Northwestern Minnesota Counselors Association

<http://www.rrtrade.org/nwmca/nwmca.htm>

Accessed 2/13/00

Serves extreme northwestern Minnesota. Association comprises school counselors from K-12 schools and community colleges. The organization has regular meetings and an executive board. It acts as a regional wing of similar state and national professional organizations.

Otter Tail County Historical Society

<http://www.geocities.com/otchs>

Accessed 2/13/00

Web site for OTCHS located in Fergus Falls, MN. Though Clay County Historical Society in Moorhead, MN is currently developing a web site, this one remains the only developed site for a county historical society in the project area. Web visitors can gain information on all facets of the museum: exhibits, gift shop, programming, and archives.

Partners for Affordable Energy
<http://www.affordable-energy.org>
Accessed 5/31/00

“Partners for Affordable Energy is a broad based coalition of organizations and businesses that support coal-based electricity as a low-cost, efficient and environmentally compatible energy source for consumers, farms and businesses in the Upper Midwest.

The goal of Partners for Affordable Energy is to keep the region's energy costs affordable. The Affordable Energy Coalition works to achieve this goal by developing support for clean, low-priced, coal-based electricity as an integral component of our state's overall energy supply, and by informing area residents about issues affecting coal-based electricity . Partners for Affordable Energy also promotes low-cost, coal- based electricity as an important component in helping the region retain a competitive economic development advantage.”

Site contains links to supporters, in three areas: agricultural, business, and electric cooperatives. Also contains news releases, articles, and graphics aimed at promoting cheap energy through coal.

Pembina Valley Development Corporation
<http://www.pvdcorp.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/7/01

PVD is a non-profit regional development corporation dedicated to the expansion of business and industry in Manitoba. Provides financial assistance, community development, and tourism promotion.

Pembina State Museum
<http://www.state.nd.us/hist/pembina.htm>
Accessed 2/13/00

Site provides museum directions, general facts, and descriptions of exhibits and facilities.

Plains Folk
<http://rrnet.com/~plains>
Accessed 7/6/00

The “Plains Folk” web site operated by Tom Isern and Jim Hoy revolves around their syndicated column. Contains a variety of information from history to small town restaurant profiles.

Posi Lock Puller Inc.
<http://www.posilock.com>
Accessed 2/1/01

Company markets patented pullers used in industrial applications, winches, etc. Headquartered in Cooperstown, ND and started by a local resident, the company has now become an important community employer and competes on a world scale.

Prairie Links
<http://www.prairielinks.com>
Accessed 5/15/00

All encompassing Canadian site featuring news, markets, classifieds, product information, chat groups, humor, and various farm related material. Site also contains a search engine and links to ag. Related sites and companies. Deals with Canadian agriculture, but “eHarvest.com” is a prominent advertiser.

Prairie Public Broadcasting
<http://www.prairiepublic.org>
Accessed 2/1/01

North Dakota public radio and television. Site provides a programming calendar and information, member and state news, history, and other regional information. Prairie Public is the best local producer of regional programming, much of it about modern agriculture and rural life.

Precision Agriculture
<http://www.precisionag.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

On-line small implement and information dealer markets high tech equipment and education to farmers; including: herbicides, seeds, gps instruments, machinery, and computer software. Web site also features 2 on-line magazines published by Precision kg.

Precision Agriculture Center Online
<http://solum3.soils.umn.edu>
Accessed 5/23/00

One of the countless University of Minnesota sites. "The University of Minnesota established the Precision Agriculture Center in 1995 to foster the use of site specific management techniques through collaborative research, education, and outreach programs."

Contains staff contacts, ongoing project an(J) conference information, educational and published resources, and web links. The Center is geared towards technically minded farm producers interested in cutting edge equipment, software, and crop science.

Precision Partners, Inc.
<http://www.precisionpartners.com>
Accessed 6/6/00

Based in Fargo, ND, Precision Partners is t consulting firm operating across the United States. They develop crop management plans, assist large scale farmers, as well as rent and sell technical farm equipment.

Presbytery of the Northern Plains
<http://www.northernplainspresbytery.com>
Accessed 2/13/00

Presbyterian Church organization serving Minnesota, North Dakota, and Montana. Lists participating churches and contacts, gives church calendar, and posts job openings.

Proceedings of the Symposium, Planning for a Sustainable Future: The Case of the North American Great Plains
<http://iisd1.iisd.ca/agri/nebraska/duncan.htm>
Accessed 6/30/00

Site combines statistics, charts, and maps with scholarly debate on the future of the Great Plains. Very good source of information and commentary.

ProduceLinks.com
<http://www.producelinks.com>
Accessed 5/31/00

Produce Links groups hundreds of retail agriculture sites on the web. Users can visit links, get on a mailing list, submit their own site, or search for companies.

Pro Farmer
<http://www.profarmer.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

Bulk of site has now merged with <http://www.agweb.com>. Site formerly provided news and market advice. Is companion to published newsletter.

Progressive Farmer
<http://www.progressivefarmer.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

Similar to other one-stop sites for news, weather, market, product, and classified information. Companion to published Progressive Farmer Magazine. Also includes information on rural life such as country living, hunting, and fishing.

Providence College and Theological Seminary
<http://www.providence.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/13/00

Located in the southern Manitoba town of Otterburne. The college provides a well rounded education grounded in Christian beliefs, while the seminary trains students to become church professionals.

Pure Country Honey
<http://www.purecountryhoney.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Apiary based in Fertile, MN.

Quest Radio Network
<http://www.questradio.net>
Accessed 5/31/00

Agricultural advertising firm serving the Red River valley. Site promotes company, also gives regional agricultural and demographic census information for 1997.

Red Power International
<http://www.redpowerinternational.com>
Accessed 1/31/01

Case dealership in Crookston. Site visitors can view the inventory of farm machinery, order parts, or schedule appointments.

Red River College
<http://www.rrc.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/7/01

Online resource for the Red River College; Winnipeg, MB. With 8 campuses scattered around the RRV, they provide arts, science, and technology based education to over 32,000 students annually.

Red River Trade Council
<http://www.rrtrade.org>
Accessed 5/23/00

“Mission Statement:

The mission of the Red River Trade Council, Inc. is to contribute to the economic growth of the Red River Region for the benefit of all its citizens through a program of regional collaboration that

increases economic activity within the regional and strengthens the regions competitive position in the global marketplace.

Objectives: within our region, we serve as a neutral source of reference for access to quality trade and information services. We develop a strategic economic vision for the region and build marketplace communication among businesses and economic developers of the region.”

Patrons can read news items, learn about affiliated projects, receive trade information, become a member, and browse an extensive set of links. Organizational members receive conference discounts, a newsletter, and networking possibilities.

Red River Valley

<http://www.redrivervalley.com>

Accessed 2/7/00

This is an excellent Canadian site promoting life, relocation, and tourism to Manitoba communities along the river. Extensive, viewers can access city facts, tourist information, weather, map, events calendar, and community chat room. Links are provided to related businesses, real estate, accommodations, restaurants, and points of interest.

Red River Valley Agricultural Research Center

<http://www.fargo.ars.usda.gov>

Accessed 2/7/01

Describes USDA research programs and provides a personnel directory and job postings.

Red River Valley Basin Flood Page

<http://www.rwic.und.edu/flood>

Accessed 5/15/00

Not updated for over a year, this site is meant to be a sort of bulletin board for Red River Valley residents concerned with current flood conditions. It gives current river information as well as advice on how to prepare for a flood and deal with its aftermath.

Red River Valley Fair

<http://www.redrivervalleyfair.com>

Accessed 5/31/00

Located in West Fargo, ND, the web page promotes the annual fair. Browsers may purchase tickets, contact fair coordinators, and find a range of pertinent information from performers to camping.

Red River Valley Flood Net

<http://www.raven.ncdc.com/rriver>

Accessed 2/7/01

Site allows people to post or read emergency messages posted by those directly affected by flooding. While still operational, the web site has no postings at this time.

Red River Valley Genealogical Society

<http://www.fargocity.com/~rrvgs>

Accessed 2/13/00

Library itself is located in Fargo and holds genealogical indexes and surveys for the entire U.S. portion of the valley. The organization also conducts fee research, sells publications, and produces a quarterly newsletter.

Red River Valley Network

<http://www.rrv.net>

Accessed 1/31/01

The area's largest rural internet provider. Operating out of Halstad, MN, they provide web access, email, and site hosting. The client list is a great source of on-line area businesses.

Red River Valley Potato Growers Association

<http://www.rrvpotatoes.org>

Accessed 1/31/01

Began in Grand Forks in 1946. Site offers organizational history, information, calendar, press releases, and contacts. Site also supplies online version of *Valley Potato Grower* magazine.

Red River Valley and Western Railroad

<http://www.rrvw.net>

Accessed 2/7/01

Headquartered in Wahpeton, ND, RRVW operates 740 miles of track, making it one of the nation's largest regional railroads. It hauls freight for major customers like Melroe Corporation in Gwinner, ND, and the Minn-Dak sugar processing plant in Wahpeton. RRVW's tracks in the Red River Valley stretch from Wahpeton to Moorhead. Web site visitors can access a service map, company history and profile, client list, as well as employee and customer news.

Red River Watershed Management Board

<http://www.rrwmb.org>

Accessed 1/31/01

Headquartered in Ada, Mn. Site provides organizational history and contact information, meeting minutes, and links to local watershed districts within RRWD.

The Ruralist: Minnesota Farmers Union News and Information

<http://mfu.org/Index.cfm>

Accessed 5/23/00

Great source of news and advocacy information for Minnesota farmers. Patrons (19,500 at current count) can vote in online polls on current issues (China trade relations), read news, browse links, and seek current market information. Page is very nicely designed and well maintained.

Rural Response

<http://www3.extension.umn.edu/ruralresponse/main.html>

Accessed 5/8/00

"Rural Response", sponsored by the Minnesota Extension Office and the University of Minnesota, is an effort to address social and economic problems in the state's rural areas. Through community and business educational outreach, Rural Response hopes to slow current downtrends in rural life. Programming covers business, community, schools, and agriculture. This exceptional site provides volumes of technical information and statistics on: market history, agricultural marketing, growing advice, mental health, finances, taxes, and legal advice.

Rural Solutions

<http://www.ruralsolutions.com>

Accessed 5/8/00

Rural Solutions appears to be one of many catch-all agriculture sites on the web. Referring to these sites, as "home pages", they attempt to provide quick information on a wide range of agricultural

topics. These include: current market information, news,, weather, web links, and classifieds. It does lack a chat room, present in many other similar sites. Rural Solutions appears to be in its infancy, and based largely in MN. Users may access information discussed, as well as community links such as restaurants, implement dealers, and churches, in participating communities (all but one in MN).

Sabian, Heather

<http://www.heathersabian.com>

Accessed 2/7/01

Artist from Fosston, MN. Photographs of her art are displayed, as well as ordering information.

Selkirk Journal

<http://www.bowesnet.com/selkirkjournal>

Accessed 2/7/01

Articles, classifieds, and subscription information for this Manitoba paper.

Sheyenne Tooling and Manufacturing Inc.

<http://www.sheyennemfg.com>

Accessed 2/1/01

“ Sheyenne Tooling & Manufacturing of Cooperstown, North Dakota, was founded in 1977 with the goal of becoming a highly regarded regional tool and die manufacturer.

Since then, we have established a reputation as a precision component manufacturer for the biggest names in American agriculture, including Melroe/Ingersoll-Rand, John Deere, Case-IH and New Holland. One reason for our success has been the commitment of our employees to produce components that far exceed quality specifications, backed up with exceptional customer service.” Web site offers photos and descriptions of the entire product line, as well as contact information.

Shooting Star Casino

<http://www.starcasino.com>

Accessed 5/31/00

Home page for Shooting Star Casino, located within the Wild Rice Watershed District, in Mahnommen County.

Shop ND

<http://www.shopnd.com>

Accessed 5/31/00

Shop ND features North Dakota commodity producers directly marketing their products to the public. Site is an electronic mall for those selling food, handcrafts, and other North Dakota specific merchandise. This is a good example of direct niche marketing on the web from the Red River Valley region.

Society for the Study of Local and Regional History

<http://www.southwest.msus.edu/sslrh/>

Accessed 5/15/00

“The Society for the Study of Local and Regional History (SSLRH) is a non-profit organization formed to promote the study of and preservation of Southwest Minnesota's historical, cultural, ethnic and religious heritage. The SSLRH is located on the campus of Southwest State University in Marshall, Minnesota.” Headed by rural historian Joe Amato, SSLRH publishes wide ranging materials on rural life.

Sources for the History of Agriculture and Rural Life
Iowa State University Library, Special Collections Department
<http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/collections/agri/tc.html>
Accessed 1/18/01

Site contains lists, indexes, and guides to the library's manuscript and records collections. Iowa State's online catalog is an excellent example of collections promotion, as well as being a rich and extensive archive for agriculture and rural materials from the nineteenth century through the 1990s.

Small Grains: The Internet Source for Small Grain Growers
<http://www.smallgrains.org>
Accessed 5/23/00

Operated by Minnesota Wheat Growers, this page contains news, newsletter, technical information, publications, agricultural events calendar, market information and weather. Unique features include a searchable wheat industry phone book and[wheat variety trial results (many located in Red River Valley). Solid web site supplying very current (last updated 5/23/00) information.

Steele County Press
http://www.corpcomm.net/~devlinpublications/scp_top.htm
Accessed 5/31/00

Online, abridged version of the Steele County Press newspaper. Includes primarily local news in the form of top stories, calendar, and obituaries.

Seffes Auctioneers Inc.
<http://www.steffesauctioneers.com>
Accessed 2/1/01

Prominent auction house headquartered in Fargo performs farm, business, and personal property auctions all over North Dakota and western Minnesota. Site visitors can read current company news, as well as view a calendar of upcoming auctions.

Snarr, Gord - Home Page
<http://www.escape.ca/~gsnarr>
Accessed 2/7/00

A farmer from Morris, MB, his home page gives a personal bio and links to other sites that interest him. He is also selling two dismantled barns.

Steinbach Bible College
<http://www.sbcollege.mb.ca>
Accessed 2/13/00

Located in Steinbach, Manitoba, the school provides an evangelical Christian education.

Sugarbeet Research and Education Board of Minnesota and North Dakota
<http://www.sbreb.org>
Accessed 5/23/00

"The Sugarbeet Research and Education Board of Minnesota and North Dakota is a cooperative effort by the sugarbeet growers of American Crystal Sugar Company, Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative and Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative. Its purpose is to promote research, education and sugar production throughout Minnesota and North Dakota. The board serves as an expert source of information on the sugar industry and gives aid to the extension services in both states."

Based in Fargo, ND, SBREB's web site provides organizational information, technical growing advice, events calendar, publications, and links. The really important and unique site feature is a journal search engine capable of finding published articles pertaining to sugar beets.

Trail County Economic Development Commission

<http://www.tcedc.com>

Accessed 6/5/00

“The Traill County Economic Development Commission provides professional services to improve community infrastructure and assist entrepreneurs with business planning and development.”

Links (members and commerce), organizational information, county history, photographs, and demographic data can all be found.

Traill County NDSU Extension Service

<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/county/traill>

Accessed 5/31/00

Site for Traill county's branch of NDSU's Extension office. Gives similar information as state page, providing a direct link. Unique information includes county staff directory, local news items (flood recovery), maps, and county census information.

Traill Rural Water

<http://www.traillruralwater.com>

Accessed 6/5/2000

Water provider for Traill county area. Site contains local and national links, organizational information, and a kid's page.

Triple R Community Futures Development Corporation

<http://www.triplercfdc.mb.ca/>

Accessed 2/7/00

Serves the Canadian Red River Valley region around Morris, MB. Its mission is to assist individuals and communities in creating and maintaining employment opportunities. The site provides organizational history, contacts, links, and event calendar.

University of Manitoba

<http://www.umanitoba.ca>

Accessed 2/7/01

Online resource for the University of Manitoba; Winnipeg, MB.

University of Minnesota - Crookston

<http://www.crk.umn.edu>

Accessed 2/13/00

Online resource for the university.

University of North Dakota

<http://www.und.nodak.edu>

Accessed 5/30/00

Online resource for University of North Dakota; Grand Forks, ND.

University of Winnipeg
<http://www.uwinnipeg.ca>
Accessed 2/7/01

Online resource for the University of Winnipeg; Winnipeg, MB.

USDA - Rural Development
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>
Accessed 5/23/00

Wealth of information on government programs (like empowerment zones) in rural, business, community, utilities, and housing development; regulations, office contacts, and news. Includes National Rural Development Partnership. One of the best federal government sites.

Variety Plus
<http://www.rrv.net/variety>
Accessed 2/1/01

Headquartered in Fertile, MN, Variety Plus provides screen and custom printing, along with other advertising materials. They are currently closing their downtown location, which includes a gift store, to focus on their corporate orders and web sales.

Vertical Solutions, Inc.
<http://www.vertical.minot.com>
Accessed 5/12/00

Vertical Solutions is an agricultural software company based in Minot, ND. They create and manufacture accounting and business software for farms. It appears to be geared towards smaller farms. Software marketed for ease of use, not for complexity or quantity of functions.

Volden Farm Bed and Breakfast
<http://www.broadvu.com/voldenfarm/home.htm>
Accessed 2/1/01

Located near Luverne, ND, the B&B owners market it as a rural secluded getaway an easy drive from Grand Forks and Fargo. Originally from the east, the owners have lived many places, but are now "where [they] belong." Web site gives a list of amenities and activities, sample menu, description of accommodations, and photographs of the surroundings. Web visitors can also register for rooms online.

West Central Initiative
<http://www.wcif.org>
Accessed 5/31/00

A public foundation serving the counties of Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin in west central Minnesota. The initiative funds a wide range of projects from cultural to industrial aimed at improving life in the area. Site users can browse projects, contact staff, find links, and download applications.

Western Minnesota Natural Farm Produce
<http://www.prairiefare.com>
Accessed 5/15/00

Site highlights six Minnesota farms which directly market their organic and free range ag. Products. Site sponsored by the Land Stewardship Project and Western Minnesota Sustainable Farming Association. Serves as a direct example of niche marketing done by growing number of independent small farmers.

Western Minnesota Prairie Waters
<http://www.prairiewaters.com>
Accessed 6/5/00

Source for tourist information and history for western Minnesota. Gives attractions, shopping, natural resources, events, and historic background. Well-used community calendar provides updates on area activities, and a festival link gives more involved background for annual celebrations. Though counties involved are out of our interest area, this type of site documents a good community resource worth preserving.

W.K. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources
<http://www.unl.edu/kellogg/main.html>
Accessed 5/31/00

Organization out of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, aims to educate and activate rural Americans towards preserving vibrant small towns. This is done largely through publications, which are listed for purchase online. I ordered some materials over the phone and the voice on the other end seemed surprised, so I'm not sure how prolific their sales program is. They produce good material, even if they are lost in a sea of similar rural development organizations.